

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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{ From Beginning,  
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## TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

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Single copies of the LIVING AGE, 18 cents.

## A KNOT OF HAIR.

## I.

SHE has a knot of russet hair :  
 It seems a simple thing to wear  
 Through years, despite of fashion's check,  
 The same deep coil about the neck ;  
     But there it twined  
 When first I knew her,  
 And learned with passion to pursue her,  
 And, if she changed it, to my mind  
 She were a creature of new kind.

## II.

On others she may flash the wise,  
 Strong light of apprehending eyes,  
 And make who fronts her beauty great  
 With hopes that awe and stimulate.  
     The happy lot  
     Be mine to follow  
 These threads through lovely curve and hollow,  
 And muse a lifetime how they got  
 Into that wild, mysterious knot.

## III.

O first of women who hast laid  
 Magnetic glory on a braid !  
 In others' tresses we may mark  
 If they be silken, blond, or dark ;  
     But thine we praise,  
     And dare not feel them ;  
 Not Hermes, god of theft, dare steal them ;  
 It is enough for aye to gaze  
 Upon their vivifying maze.  
     Academy.                      MICHAEL FIELD.

## ON THE GARDEN TERRACE.

## HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

SURELY this leaf-screened terrace path,  
 This moss-flecked stair of time-worn stone,  
 Some strange inherent magic hath —  
 Some witching glamour of its own !  
 So lingeringly my feet have strayed  
 As loath to break the spell which seems  
 To breathe o'er this long balustrade  
 A very atmosphere of dreams.

No miracle of art is here,  
 No feat of engineering skill,  
 Forever bidding us reverse  
 The triumph of a master-will.  
 Yet, surely, was he blest, whose thought  
 Conceived yon sombre screen of yew,  
 Then reared his pillar'd wall, and wrought  
 This living idyl from the two.

To this the changing seasons bring  
 No phase to make that beauty less,  
 Which lives in every perfect thing  
 By its own right of loveliness.  
 So tenderly the touch of Time  
 Has worked its will with Haddon Hall —  
 So deftly guided in their climb  
 The draping ivy on its wall,

Since first those deep-set windows gleamed  
 O'er this green square of velvet sward,  
 And ladies from the terrace beamed  
 To watch the bowlers, and reward  
 With ripple of applauding din  
 Some winning stroke ; and all the place  
 Was crisp *frou-frou* of crinoline,  
 And farthingale, and rustling lace.

And I — who watched the gloaming's dyes  
 Fade to a blush ; and by and by,  
 Low in the east, a pale moon rise  
 Through filmy bands of dove-grey sky —  
 Can picture yet those shapes of yore,  
 And dream my vagrant fancy hears  
 The softly clicking bowls, once more  
 Rolled by gay, gallant cavaliers.

## L'ENVOI.

Dear record of a peaceful past,  
 I cannot think thee senseless stone !  
 A very living heart thou hast,  
 Kept warm by memories of thine own.  
     Good Words.                      S. REID.

## BY THE GATES OF THE SEA.

BRIGHT amber bars o'er all the west,  
 With glow as deep as ruddy ore ;  
 The weary coming home for rest,  
 And children's laughter from the shore.  
 The mellow chimes of evening bells,  
 The ships receding o'er the main ;  
 The tear-dimmed eyes and sad farewells  
 Which have been and will be again.

A seven years' child upon the sands  
 Amidst the gold-lipped mystic shells  
 Which murmur of fair, sunny lands  
 Where wondrous music ebbs and swells.  
 With growing joy his eager ear  
 Hears songs from isles in emerald seas,  
 And strains of heavenly music clear  
 Of his life's far-back mysteries.

An aged man with silvered hair  
 Gazing into the glowing west  
 With wistful eyes and yearning prayer  
 For peace and home and perfect rest ;  
 Slow searching through the years gone by  
 For some sweet, tender long-lost strain ;  
 And vainly calling with a sigh  
 On friends who answer not again.

Two children on the shining shore  
 Amidst their palaces of sand ;  
 Two worn ones by the cottage door —  
 The open Book of God at hand.  
 Two lovers happy, loyal, brave,  
 And knit together for the strife,  
 Two resting in one peaceful grave —  
 So thus goes on the round of life !  
     Argosy.                      ALEXANDER LAMONT.

From The Fortnightly Review.  
EGYPT, 1882-1892.

THE progress that has been made in Egypt during the last seven years is one of the most remarkable events in modern times, and reads more like a transformation scene in a fairy-tale than one of the hard realities of history. Ten years ago—in 1882—the condition of the country was almost desperate. Emerging from liquidation by the help of France and England, it appeared again to be on the verge of absolute bankruptcy. Discontent permeated the whole population, and a spirit of revolt was rampant in the army. Disturbances accompanied with cruelty and bloodshed were frequent in the most densely populated of its towns. The finest portion of the chief commercial city, Alexandria, had been burnt to the ground, and the European population that carried on its trade and commerce had fled or been given over to outrage and massacre. Trade and commerce were for a time completely paralyzed. The Khedive Tewfik was a fugitive in his palace of Ras-el-tin, and the government, such as it was, was in the hands of rebel soldiers. The opinion of Europe was shown at the time by its stock, which went down to 45.

Now, in 1892, all is changed. The finances of the country are in as sound condition as those of any of the States of Europe. On all sides are to be seen signs of prosperity and content. The army has been reorganized, and disloyalty in its ranks is unknown; trade and commerce are flourishing; vast reforms affecting the well-being of the whole population have been carried out; Alexandria has been rebuilt in so magnificent a style that its people begin to think that its needless burning was not an unmitigated evil; great material improvements with regard to irrigation have been made throughout the country; the new Khedive Abba has succeeded to his throne in as quiet a manner as would the heir of any old-established monarchy; and the opinion of Europe may be grasped by the fact that Egyptian stock is at par.

The cause or causes of this almost miraculous change are well worthy the consideration of Englishmen, especially

at the present juncture. Whether Great Britain should have interfered in Egypt as she did in 1882 was a question upon which at the time there was much difference of opinion; but the interference having been made by the responsible rulers of the country, it is impossible for us now to escape from the natural consequences of our actions. With the majority of the French the opinion is fixed and apparently ineradicable that our presence in Egypt is due to a cool, premeditated policy. As a matter of fact, we were there in spite of ourselves. No government was more unwilling to intervene in foreign affairs in any way than that of Mr. Gladstone in 1882, and they would never have intervened at all had not events been too strong for them. With certain results of interference by Lord Beaconsfield's government in foreign and colonial affairs before their eyes—the mistakes made in Zululand, the disasters in Afghanistan, the doubtful acquisition of Cyprus with its entangling engagements, the unprecedented deposition of Ismail Pasha—they came into power in 1880 with the sincere determination to interfere as little as possible in such matters. Their own talents, they conceived, were more adapted for home affairs, and had they been able to carry out their wishes they would have banished foreign and colonial policy to Saturn. It is a strange coincidence that, coming into office with such strong, and, no doubt, sincere views of non-intervention, they actually, during their five years of office, intervened more than any government the country has had for the last half-century. They were always intervening, and the disastrous consequences which generally attended their intervention may be attributed to this original disinclination to intervene—their intervention generally coming too late and being supported in a half-hearted manner.

It is a fact that should not be forgotten that the first three years of our intervention in Egypt did more harm than good to the country, and the harm would never have happened if the government of the day had had the courage to act upon the advice and opinions of those who had experience in the country and knew the state

of affairs. Had the most ordinary precautions been taken, Alexandria would never have been burnt down, and the probabilities are there would have been no Egyptian War, no Tel-el-Keber, no massacre of Egyptian troops, and no loss of the Soudanese provinces. It is undoubted that three years after the British intervention Egypt was in a worse condition than before our intervention. Alexandria had been burnt, the armies of Hicks Pasha and Baker Pasha had been annihilated, the garrisons of Tokar, Singat, Senaar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola had been massacred. Lord Wolseley's expedition to Khartoum had failed, Gordon had been sacrificed, and the whole of the Soudanese provinces, with a population supposed to number eleven millions of souls, had been lost to Egypt. The Egyptians might well ask to be saved from their friends, for it is absolutely true that all these disasters came from preventable causes and might have been prevented, or at least enormously mitigated had it not been for the almost unaccountable and apparently infatuated conduct of the government. To foreigners their conduct was unaccountable, but, no doubt, the causes were, first, their sincere disinclination to intervene at all, and then the divided state of opinion among their supporters, some being for intervention, some against, and the result was an attempt to please both sides, ending in a policy of change, hesitancy, and uncertainty.

In one respect Mr. Gladstone's ministry showed its good sense. For the carrying out of its objects it selected excellent instruments. For extricating a country or a ministry from difficulties better men could not be found than those they selected — Lords Dufferin and Northbrook, General Gordon and Sir Evelyn Baring; and the question why the first three failed and the last has succeeded is well worthy the attention of statesmen. The ability of all for the work they were called upon to do is admitted, and the cause of failure of Lord Dufferin, Lord Northbrook, and General Gordon was that their hands were tied by the ministers at home and they received no support for the courses they advised or attempted to pursue. Lord

Dufferin was asked to perform an impossible task — to draw up a workable constitution for a people who did not know what a constitution was. Lord Northbrook, a man of great administrative ability, with all the experience acquired as a governor-general of India, and with the rank of a Cabinet minister, was sent as a special high commissioner to inquire into the causes of Egypt's woes, and to suggest remedies. What evils he did find out, what ameliorative measures he suggested, are absolutely unknown to the public, who paid the bill for the mission. The mission ended in moonshine. His report would, no doubt, be admirable and statesmanlike, but apparently it did not suit the party crotchets of the ministry, for it never saw the light; no copy of it is, I believe, to be found in the Foreign Office, and, if report be true, it was committed to the flames. As for General Gordon, his treatment by the government of the day was treacherous and cruel in the extreme. Called upon at a moment's notice to give up a good and useful appointment under the king of the Belgians, for the double purpose of saving the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan from annihilation and of extricating the government of the day from the difficulties their vacillating policy had produced, he, of all men, should have been trusted and allowed to act on his own responsibility. His gallantry and military ability were known to all; but the special reason for his employment was his knowledge of the Soudan country and its inhabitants. His expedition from the first was considered by many to be a forlorn hope, and on all sides it was admitted that he carried his life in his hand. If ever the leader of an expedition should have had a free hand it was General Gordon, and yet, apparently for party considerations, his hands were from the first tied, and his requests neglected or refused. His requests for money, for Indian troops, for Turkish soldiers, and for English officers were all declined. The most flagrant refusal of all was that of Zebheir Pasha. People knowing the character of Soudanese chieftains might have their doubts as to Gordon's wisdom in asking for the co-operation of Zebheir Pasha. He



had unwittingly been the cause of the cruel murder of Zebehr's young son—a boy of eighteen years of age—and some thought that if opportunity offered Zebehr might take his revenge. This, however, was Gordon's own affair. He wanted him. Nubar Pasha, then prime minister at Cairo, and Sir Evelyn Baring both approved, and, in the first instance, the government did the same. When, however, Lord Randolph Churchill, then in the responsible position of the leader of the fourth party, expressed himself as shocked at one who had owned slaves being employed by Gordon, the ministers were frightened, and actually refused to let Gordon have his way. Well might he in despair use words against the government that employed him which, I should think, were never used before by any agent in his position without his being at once recalled—saying that “he left to them the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Senaar, Kassala, Berber, and Khartoum.” Great as were his talents for the purpose for which he was employed, it is no wonder that he failed when his advice was neglected and his views scouted by the ministers who despatched him on his dangerous errand.

The case of Sir Evelyn Baring differs from that of Lords Dufferin and Northbrook and of General Gordon in this most important respect—he has had the opportunity of serving under Lord Salisbury, as well as under Mr. Gladstone, and so of showing what stuff he himself, when unfettered, was made of. Facts have proved that he is a man of great ability, a born administrator, with all the financial talents that have distinguished so many that bear his name, with a will as strong as that of the great Elchi Stratford Canning, and with an unbounded capacity for work. Like all great administrators, he has the faculty of inspiring those who work under him with confidence and a love of their work, and already he has trained up a small band of Eastern administrators, who must have a good future before them. The abilities of one of his ablest lieutenants, Mr. Gerald Portal, have been recognized by Lord Salisbury by appointing him, at the early age of thirty-two, consul-

general at Zanzibar. Mr. John Gorst, son of the present secretary of the treasury, though now serving in the offices of the Egyptian ministry of finance, is considered by those capable of forming opinions as one of his aptest pupils, with a knowledge of Eastern affairs and a tact in dealing with them which must be useful to an empire like ours. Sir Edgar Vincent, though nominally financial adviser to the Egyptian government, would be the first to acknowledge that his financial successes have been due to the training and the inspiration he received from Sir Evelyn. There is no reason for supposing that Sir Evelyn Baring's brain power has been different between 1885 and 1892 from what it was between 1883 and 1885, or that his administrative faculties underwent a process of regeneration on the accession to office of Lord Salisbury in July of 1885. Yet the fact remains that up to 1885 his administration was a failure, and that since then it has been one of the most brilliant successes of the century. He was appointed in 1883 by Mr. Gladstone, and under his *regime* up to July, 1885, there occurred the massacre of Hicks Pasha's army, the defeat of Baker Pasha's troops, the useless expeditions to Suakim, the slaughter of the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan, the reckless abandonment of the Soudanese provinces, the curtailment of Egyptian territory by throwing back the frontier to Wady Halfa, the failure of Lord Wolseley's expedition, and the eventual sacrifice of Gordon—catastrophes enough, one would think, to damn and daunt the most courageous of administrators. At the time blame was freely attributed to Sir Evelyn for many of these disasters, but subsequent events plainly prove that those were responsible who had tied his hands as they had tied those of Dufferin, Northbrook, and Gordon. Lord Salisbury came into power in July, 1885, and under Mr. Gladstone's ministry, from February, to July, 1886, Lord Rosebery was at the Foreign Office. Of him it may be said with certainty that, in his short administration of foreign affairs, and especially of Egypt, he followed in the footsteps of Lord Salisbury, and not those of Lord Granville or Mr. Gladstone. The

difference to Sir Evelyn Baring has been this. He has had a far freer hand, with far larger personal responsibility, with the certain knowledge that he would be loyally supported at home, and that his measures would not be made subservient to party purposes. This has given free scope to his ability, and the results show how much more advantageous it is to leave such ability unfettered than to crib, cabin, and confine it by crude directions from a country more than two thousand miles distant.

The successes of Sir Evelyn Baring's administration, or to speak with more technical correctness, the Egyptian administration under the gentle guidance and supervision of Sir Evelyn, speak for themselves.

In 1882, the year of Mr. Gladstone's intervention, the finances of Egypt were such that, taken in consideration with the state of the country, Egyptian stock had sun in the market to 45, and the deficit for the year was £632,368. In 1883 the deficit on the year was £709,397, and in 1884, £665,444. In 1885 there was a small surplus of £3,979, caused by the cutting down of expenditure by nearly one million, the revenue itself being less than in 1883 and 1884 by between £250,000 and £300,000. In 1886, 1887, 1888, and 1889, though the expenditure increased to more than it was in 1884, the surpluses continued till they reached £653,939 in 1890, and £1,100,000 in 1891.

This result has not been produced by an increase of taxation or by an undue lowering of expenditure. On the contrary, though extravagance in various departments has been cut down, there has been a large increase in the expenditure of money upon useful objects, such as education, the improvement of the prisons, and the furtherance of public works, and with it there has been a large remission of taxation. The present healthy state of Egyptian finance has been brought about by a due attention to proper economy, by reforms in the distribution and collection of the taxes, and especially by attention to productive public works.

Irrigation is the one thing needful to make Egypt a productive and flourishing country, and to the improvement in the irrigation works, which were completed in 1891, is due more than to any other single cause its present prosperous condition. Sir Evelyn Baring foresaw the necessity of these works in 1884, and chiefly upon his recommendation the powers at the London Conference of that year agreed to

the sum of £1,000,000 being added to the debt of Egypt for this purpose. At the time doubts were expressed as to the advisability of adding to the debt of so deeply indebted a country, but the result has more than justified the course then pursued.

Altogether a sum of £1,800,000 has been expended since the year 1885 in repairing the "barrage," originally projected by an eminent French engineer, the construction of the Tewfikieh Canal, and other works connected with irrigation and drainage in both Lower and Upper Egypt. The object has been to afford means of water transit independent of the state of the Nile, and to bring water, so to say, to the doors of the fellaheen for them to use for agricultural purposes. In his last report Sir Evelyn Baring says "that he has no hesitation in saying that the expenditure of this £1,800,000 on irrigation and drainage has contributed probably more than any one cause to the comparative prosperity that the country now enjoys." The increase in the cotton crops alone justifies his statement. During the eleven years from 1879-80 to 1889-90 the average yield of the cotton crop annually was two million nine hundred thousand cantars. In 1890-91, when the country had partially reaped the benefits of the repaired barrage, the crop sprang up to four million one hundred and fifty-nine thousand cantars, and the yield for the year 1891-92 is calculated at not less than four million five hundred thousand cantars. This shows that since the repair of the barrage and the improvement of irrigation works, the crop is one million, six hundred thousand in excess of what it was in the eleven years previous. In money, at even the present low price of cotton, this is an annual gain of £3,000,000.

One of the results of this improvement in the finances of Egypt and its increased productiveness, caused by the repairs to the barrage and the drainage works, is a development of its trade, and it is estimated that, were prices the same now as they were in 1881, the increase in the value of exports and imports would be nearly £7,000,000, and of this trade Great Britain enjoys by far the largest share.

There is one feature which requires special notice with regard to this general improvement. Ten years ago wise prophets would tell you that there were three things that were impossible in Egypt—1st, to make it solvent; 2nd, to collect the taxes without the free use of the kourbash; 3rd, to execute public works without that

forced and cruel labor which went under the name of the *corvée*. Now, not only is Egypt solvent, but the use of the *kourbash* and the *corvée* have both been abolished. The taxes are now more easily collected than they ever were in the days when the *kourbash* was systematically applied to the feet of the wretched fellahen, and more public works have been executed by laborers who are paid a fair day's wage, and are voluntary workers, than ever were in the same time under the remorseless system of *corvée*. In addition, slavery has been practically abolished; by law slavery is abolished, but there are still many domestic slaves who prefer their present condition to that of free servants. In fact, they rather look down upon the latter with contempt, as holding an inferior status in their master's household. Free servants can be turned away at will, whereas the domestic slave looks upon himself as attached to the domain, and has the right to remain there, and to be kept and fed, till he dies. Whatever so-called slavery exists is voluntary, and not by law compulsory.

Very many improvements, that space will not permit me to notice here, have been made in the last seven years, with regard to the railways, the telegraphs, the post-office, the army, the police, and especially in the criminal courts and in the administration of justice. It is no exaggeration to say that, at no period of their known history have the Egyptian people enjoyed anything like the advantages they do at the present time. Their national prosperity has been greatly increased, and they now enjoy rights and privileges to which they have been strangers for thousands of years. These advantages are directly due to the controlling influence of this country, and so far from these advantages conferred upon them being a burden to us, our population has gained directly by increased commercial trade.

The serious question for responsible people in this country to ask themselves is, Whether this beneficial improvement is to continue, or whether it is to be checked and probably entirely destroyed?

One thing is certain, that unless there is some European control all the advantages that have been gained during the last seven years will vanish. Were Egypt left to itself, if that be possible, or were it again to pass under the control of Turkish pashas, the *kourbash* and the *corvée* would be quickly revived, and though slavery might not be legalized, it would

be encouraged and increase without any change in the law. Finance would again be neglected, and the taxes be imposed upon the old system of making the poorest pay most and saving the rich. Justice would again become a commodity to be purchased by the rich, and quite out of the reach of those who most require it. In fact, after seven years of prosperity and good government, it is probable that were European control withdrawn, there would be such a rebound that the last state of the country would be worse than the first. Even the great works that have been completed would almost certainly be neglected, and by carelessness and inattention would in time go to ruin. The barrage itself would in time be destroyed. It does not rest on firm rock or on gravel foundations, but simply on the alluvial deposit of the Delta. It is the opinion of experts, and especially of Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff, to whose skill and engineering talents the repair and completion of these works is mainly due, that the great works are safe on only one condition, viz., that they are constantly watched. Speaking of their construction and their present condition, he tells us that "while the barrage may be pronounced a sound reliable work so long as it is carefully watched, and repairs always effected as they are required, it would be madness to cease this careful surveillance." Sir Evelyn Baring, who has watched the repairs anxiously from the beginning, adds that, "much as he wishes to see natives of Egypt employed in the service of government to the utmost extent possible, he is most decidedly of opinion that it is essential, in the interests of the whole population, that for many years to come the barrage should be placed under the charge of highly qualified European engineers."

Not merely have the works as they stand added enormously to the material prosperity of the country, which would be injuriously affected by any neglect of maintenance, but they are capable of almost unlimited expansion. One of the gravest and most disastrous errors of Mr. Gladstone's government was their disclaiming responsibility for the Soudan provinces in 1883. Had they then owned the responsibility which their own actions of the year before had imposed upon them, and taken in hand boldly the pacification and restoration to order of that country, there can be no doubt that their efforts would have been successful. It is quite true that many of the Egyptian

and Turkish governors of provinces and districts in the Soudan abused the powers entrusted to them, and ground down the people under them, and, with greedy rapacity, appropriated to themselves the goods and money they had no right to. It is not surprising that many of those whom Mr. Gladstone described as "men struggling to be free," and to fight whom he immediately afterwards sent British troops, should have been goaded into insurrection. But the rule of even the Egyptian pashas was preferable to anarchy, and under British guidance this rule would soon have been converted into a real and lasting blessing for all the inhabitants of the Soudanese provinces. The results of the anarchy of the last ten years, for which Mr. Gladstone's government is chiefly responsible, are too horrible to contemplate. The population in 1882 was considered to be by those best informed on the subject about eleven millions. Father Ohrwalder, who has recently escaped from Khartoum and made his way to Cairo, is of opinion that three-fifths of this population of the Soudan have been destroyed during the last ten years by war, famine, and disease. The rule of the Mahdist dervishes is cruel in the extreme; there is great discontent, and we are told that the whole population of the Soudan, with the exception, perhaps, of the race that supply the soldiers for the Mahdi's army, "would welcome the re-establishment of Egyptian rule."

When Lord Granville disclaimed responsibility of the Soudan in 1883, and adopted the easy policy of letting things take their course, all the consequences of his action were foretold by those acquainted with the country. Nobody understood the circumstances of the country better than Sir Samuel Baker, and again and again in the columns of the *Times* he raised his voice against England's fatuous neglect, and foretold the dire consequences which have since actually come to pass. The advocates of *laissez faire* then were certain that the Soudan ought never to have belonged to Egypt, and that when once it was separated it would never again be annexed. I am not quite sure that Sir Evelyn Baring himself did not to some extent share their views. If he did, he has altered them now. He tells us in his last report that the "Soudan, so far, at least, as Khartoum, ought to be, and he trusts will be eventually, re-occupied by Egyptian troops," and adds that, "should that event ever take place, a certain very

limited amount of European guidance and assistance will be indispensable in order to avoid a recurrence to the abuses of the past."

Everybody will agree with Sir Evelyn that now is not the time to attempt a reconquest or a re-occupation. It is one thing to have kept it in 1883, and another thing to try to retake it in 1892. But it is possible that civilizing influences may spread there without recourse to the sword, and that the different provinces may gradually come under the influence of Egyptian and European control. The continuation of the barrage up the Nile would go a long way towards effecting this. Were the Nile navigable to Khartoum, independent of the obstructions of the cataracts, and were the water stored at various points for the purposes of irrigation, not only would hundreds of thousands of feddans of land be made fertile, but the whole of the provinces would be brought within the reach of civilizing influences. Many schemes for the extension of the barrage are now under consideration, and their eventual success depends entirely upon whether or not Egypt remains under European control.

If European control is necessary, as no one acquainted with the East can doubt, for retaining the advantages Egypt has already in recent years acquired, and for still further developing the vast resources of the country and the adjacent provinces, the only remaining question is what European control is the best. Joint control has already been tried and it has not proved a success. One of the evils that retard progress in Egypt now is the liability she is under in various matters to the interference of the various powers. The retention of the capitulations and the voice the various powers have in the expenditure of certain of her funds are distinct and acknowledged disadvantages. The dual control of France and England honestly and with good faith on the part of both countries commenced under the government of Lord Beaconsfield, succeeded during fine weather but collapsed on the first approach of a storm. If there is to be any effective and beneficial European control it must be that of one European nation, and the only nations that could exercise that control are either France or England. Considering the events of the last ten years, it seems absolutely impossible that France could take the place that England now holds. The material interests of this country in Egypt have always

been far greater than those of France. Our trade with it is infinitely larger, and for every French vessel that passes through the Canal there are fifteen British. Considering our position in India it is simply impossible that we could quietly allow Egypt to pass under French control. Experts may differ as to whether the Canal or the Cape would be the best route to India in time of war, but the safe course is to secure as far as possible that both should be open to us. In 1882, when danger was at hand, France voluntarily withdrew from the dual control. She practically renounced her responsibilities under that arrangement and by her action compelled us alone to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. During that time she had only one thing to complain of—the speeches of Mr. Gladstone. He was then the responsible minister of this country, and while his actions were necessitating a prolonged stay of British troops in Egypt he was constantly declaring that their stay was only temporary and implying that it would be for a very short period. No one would impute to Mr. Gladstone insincerity in the mischievous declarations he was then in the habit of making. He, no doubt, implicitly believed them. They only show that he was entirely ignorant of the country and the people with whom he was interfering, and that when he drifted into interference, he had never considered what the permanent consequences of such interference, from the very nature of the case, must necessarily be. His declarations have undoubtedly rendered the position of Great Britain far more difficult than it otherwise would have been, and are the main cause of the irritation felt by many of the French. Lord Salisbury, recognizing the obligations such declarations imposed upon this country, did his best to redeem them by proposing what is known as the Drummond-Wolff Convention. All candid Frenchmen now admit that it was as foolish for them not to accept this convention—as an arrangement entirely redeeming the foolish promises made by Mr. Gladstone—as it was for them in 1882 to have withdrawn their ships from the harbor of Alexandria. Every fair-minded person must admit that the French as a nation have nothing whatever to complain of in Lord Salisbury's policy of the last seven years. It is impossible to formulate any charge against it, and the chances are that we should hear no complaints of it from the other side of the Channel were it not that our astute neigh-

bors are calculating upon a possible change of government.

The declarations made with regard to Egypt by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley at Newcastle will probably have no real effect upon the policy of this country with regard to Egypt; but in Egypt itself and in France, and perhaps in other European countries, they have already had a disturbing effect little thought of by their authors. In Egypt they have done much mischief. With all her present prosperity there is one thing that that country stands greatly in need of, viz., capital; up to now British investors have been very slow in sinking their capital in Egypt, and the sole reason that prevents them doing so is the uncertainty of the continuance of British control there. Were it absolutely certain that the Egyptian policy of this country would be continuous—the same under a Radical government as it has been under the Unionist one—there can be no doubt that British capital would flow rapidly to that country to the mutual advantage of both nations. The one weak plank in the Egyptian platform is the element of doubt, the uncertainty as to the continuity of British control. That it will continue is almost a certainty. Even if the Radical party were to come in, events would be too strong for them again, as they were in 1882, and the Newcastle declarations, like many others similar, would have to be explained away. Lord Rosebery would probably be foreign secretary, and he is certain to continue the policy he adopted for six months in 1886. After Lord Salisbury, Lord Rosebery probably understands the bearings of foreign policy better than any other statesman belonging to any of the political parties, and were he left to himself the interests of the Empire would be safe. The question is, Will he be left to himself? The Radical party of the present day consists of a variety of sections—some with imperial instincts, like the writers in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the more moderate members of the party; others, with self-denying views, like Mr. Morley and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who apparently do not think that any possession we have is worth fighting for; others, like the Irish members, who would always side with the enemies of Great Britain, and others, with wondrous convictions on non-intervention, universal arbitration, and peace at any price—and the probabilities are that Lord Rosebery would be hampered, as Lord Granville was, and that the difficulties inherent in



the management of foreign affairs would be enormously enhanced by the divergence of the views of his Radical supporters.

Not only have the Newcastle declarations of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley had an injurious effect in Egypt, but they have already raised false hopes both in Turkey and France. Politics, like poverty, makes strange bedfellows, and were the issue not so grave it would be amusing to think of Turkish pashas gloating over the prospect of their old "bag-and-baggage" foe, Mr. Gladstone, coming again into power. That they expect some personal gain from the event, if it happens, is certain. They do not anticipate this happy result from any affection that the late prime minister may have towards them, but they think, not without reason, that in the general hurly-burly which his return to power would inevitably produce, they may gain some of their lost authority, and that there may be some chance of the return of the good old times of kourbash and corvée. The French were so elated with the speeches referred to that they wished to *fête* the heroes of them, and actually invited the statesman who had made promises which it was impossible to fulfil to a public banquet. Had the invitation been accepted, it would have been interesting to see whether a French audience would have been as satisfied with the explaining away of the obvious meaning of words as are certain constituencies of Great Britain and Ireland.

France and Turkey are the only powers that in any way are jealous of British intervention in Egypt. The other powers of Europe are content that matters should remain as they are. That they should prefer British control to French is only natural. Had France intervened instead of Great Britain she would probably have acted as she has in Tunis and in other places within the sphere of her influence, her protective system favoring French producers, and placing those of other countries at a disadvantage. Now, so long as Egypt is under British control, every power has exactly the same rights and facilities for trading and manufacturing as we have ourselves. Had the French gained Tel-el-Kebir there can be but little doubt that short work would have been made with the capitulations afterwards. England, on the contrary, in every possible way, has consulted the wishes of the various powers, and sought their co-operation, and amongst the chief gainers have

been thousands of French peasants who had invested their savings in Egyptian securities.

All parties in England are desirous of being on the best possible terms with France. She is our nearest neighbor, and we have far more in common with her, in sentiment and interests, than we have with any other nation of Europe. It should be our aim to maintain the most cordial relations with her. That they feel a certain amount of soreness at our presence in Egypt is unquestionably true. To a great extent they are angry with themselves for the two fatal mistakes their political leaders made in ordering their fleet to run away in 1882, and in rejecting the Drummond-Wolff convention. Great as were the mistakes made by Mr. Gladstone's government in that year, the one mistake of the French government was greater. What, however, now sustain and increase the irritation and annoyance are the false hopes raised by such speeches as those made by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley at Newcastle.

If by any untoward chance, and by the folly of the electors in not knowing upon what the true interests of the nation depend, the Radical party were to be returned to power at the general election, one of the first things France would require would be the fulfilment of the expectations raised by Radical oratory. This could not be complied with without the upsetting of all the great work that has been done during the last seven years, and that section of the Radical party which has the same imperial instincts as the members of the Unionist party would not permit it; the only result would be increased irritation on the part of France, and the embittering of the relations between the two countries.

As for Egypt, it would be the height of cruelty to arrest in any way the beneficial treatment she is now undergoing. The last seven years of good government have improved and benefited her condition far beyond the anticipations of even those who have the strongest faith in the effects of good government. Another seven years of similar government will vastly increase and place on a firm basis those improvements, and Europe and Great Britain, as well as Egypt, will reap the benefit. Should this bright future be marred by the accession of the Radical party to power, a serious responsibility will rest with the electorate of Great Britain and Ireland.

W. T. MARRIOTT.



From Temple Bar.

AUNT ANNE.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was not at all a bad thing to do, Florence thought, as she sat and considered over the arrangement Mr. Fisher had so suddenly made in regard to the house in town and the cottage at Witley. The country would do the children good, and Aunt Anne would probably enjoy it. Of course the latter would consent to go with them. Indeed she had clearly no other resource. Florence wondered if she would like it.

But Mrs. Baines was so full of news herself when she returned that she had no time to listen to any one else.

"My love," she said, "I have passed a most important day."

"Relate your adventures, Aunt Anne." But at this request Mrs. Baines winked and spoke slowly.

"I had an engagement in the morning," she began, and hesitated. "When I had fulfilled it," she went on, "I thought it right, Florence, to go and call on Sir William Rammage. He has been ill, and I wanted to assure him of my sympathy. Besides, I felt that it was due to you—that it was an imperative duty on my part to ask him for an allowance, and that it was his duty to give it to me."

"But, Aunt Anne—"

"Yes, my love. I am living now on your generous kindness; don't think that I am insensible to it. But for your tenderness, my darling, I should have been alone in a little lodging now, as I was when—when I was first left a widow."

"I should not like to think of you in a little lodging, Aunt Anne," Florence said gently; and then she added gaily, "but continue your adventures."

Mrs. Baines gave a long sigh, and was silent for a moment. She sat down on the easy-chair and, as if she had not heard Florence's interruption, went on with a strange tragic note in her voice:—

"I never told you about that time, Florence. I had three pounds in the world when I came to London; just three pounds to maintain my position until I could find something to do. I had a little room at Kilburn—a little room at the top of the house; and I used to sit day after day, week after week, waiting. I had no coals, only a little spirit-lamp by which I made some water hot, then poured it into a jug and covered it over and warmed my hands by it; it was often an hour before it grew cold, my love."

"But why did you not come to us?"

"I couldn't," the old lady answered in an obstinate tone. "I felt that it would not be treating you properly to present myself before you while I was so poor and miserable"—she paused and looked into the fire for a moment, then suddenly went on—"the woman at the corner where I went every morning to buy a newspaper, saw that I was poor, and presumed upon it. Once she said I looked nipped up, and asked me to sit down and get warm. I reproved her for familiarity, and never went to the shop again."

"But perhaps she meant it for kindness?"

"She should have remembered her position, my love, and asked me in a different manner. There is nothing more painful to bear than the remembrance of one's own rank in life when one has to encounter the hardships that belong by right to a lower class." Aunt Anne paused again for a moment, and gave a long sigh before she went on: "We won't go over it, my dear. If Mrs. North had shown less levity in her conduct and more consideration to me, I should have been there still instead of living on your charity."

"Oh no, Aunt Anne."

"Yes, my love, it is so; even though you love me and I love you, it is charity; and I felt it keenly when you resented my little offering of cream this morning—you, to whom I would give everything I possess."

"Oh no, Aunt Anne—" interrupted Florence.

"And so—and so," continued the old lady with a little gasp, "I went to Sir William Rammage once more. I told him—I told him"—she stopped—"I told him how our mothers had stood over us together, years and years ago."

"Yes, I know," Florence said soothingly. She had heard this so often before. "I hope he was good to you?"

"My dear, he listened with compunction, but he saw the force of what I said. He will write and tell me how much he will allow me," she added simply.

"I am very glad, Aunt Anne; I hope he will write soon, and be generous. I know it will make you happier."

"It will, indeed," and Mrs. Baines gave another long sigh. "I shall not be dependent on any one much longer."

"Except upon him," Florence said unwittingly.

"No, I shall not feel that I am dependent even upon him," and she looked up quickly. "He will give it and I shall take

it for the honor of the family. I told him how impossible it was that I could go on living upon you and Walter, that it would be a disgrace. I could not live upon him either. He has shown me so little sympathy, my love, that I could not endure it. I shall take the allowance from him as I should take an inheritance, knowing that it is not given to me for my own sake. I could not take it in any other spirit; but it would be as wrong in him to forget what is due to us, as it would be in me to let him do so. It would shed dishonor on his name."

And again she was silent, she seemed to be living over the past, to be groping her way back among days that were over before Florence was ever born, to be seeing people whose very names had not been heard for years.

"They would rise in their graves if I were left to starve," she continued, "I have always felt it; and it was but right towards them that I should go to William; it was due to them even that I should live on you and Walter, my darling, till I received an adequate income."

Suddenly her voice changed again, the wonderful smile came back—the happy look that always seemed as if it had travelled from the youth she had left long years behind.

"You understand, my love?" she asked. "Bless you for all your kindness, but I am not going to intrude upon you much longer. I have already seen an apartment that will, I think, suit my requirements."

"Oh, no."

"Yes, my love, it will be much better. You cut me to the quick this morning, Florence," and her voice grew sad; "you said that you would have to send away your dear children because my influence would spoil them."

"Aunt Anne!" Florence began in consternation.

"Yes, dear, yes," the old lady said solemnly, "it gave me the deepest pain, as I sat and thought it over in the privacy of my own chamber. But when I came down-stairs and you shared your dear mother's gift with me, I knew that you loved me sincerely."

"I do," said Florence soothingly.

"I am sure of it, my darling," with even more solemnity, "but it will be better that I should take an apartment. It will rejoice your tender heart to know that by your gift you have helped me to secure one, and when I receive my allowance from Sir William I shall feel that I am independent once more. You must for-

give me, my love; it is not that I do not appreciate your hospitality—yours and Walter's—I do. But I feel that it would sadden all my dear ones who are gone, if they knew that I was alone in the world, without a home of my own. That is why I went to Sir William Rammage, Florence; and though he said little, I feel sure that he saw the matter in a proper light, and felt as I do about it."

"What did he say?"

"He said he would think it over, and when he had made up his mind he would write to me. My love, would you permit me to ring the bell?"

"Yes, of course. Why do you always ask me? Don't you feel at home here, dear Aunt Anne?" Florence asked, thinking that Sir William's answer had, after all, committed him to little.

"I hope I shall never so far forget myself as not to treat you with the courtesy that you have a right to expect, my darling. I will never take advantage of our relationship. Jane," she said, with quite another manner, and in a cold and slightly haughty tone, to the servant who had entered, "would you have the goodness to divest me of my cloak?—and if your mistress gives you permission, perhaps you would carry it up to my room?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane respectfully, but without much willingness in her manner. The servants had learned to resent the tone in which Mrs. Baines usually spoke to them. "She treats us like dirt," the housemaid explained to the cook; "and if we're made of dirt, I should like to know what she's made of? She gave me a shilling the other day, and another time a new apron done up in a box from the draper's; but I don't care about her for all her presents. I know she always sees every speck of dust that others would be blind to; it's in her wink that she does."

"And now, Aunt Anne, that you have told me all your news, I want you to listen to mine," Florence said.

Then she gave an account of Mr. Fisher's visit, and of the letting of the house for a couple of months.

"So, Aunt Anne," she continued triumphantly, "I want you to be very, very good, and to go with the children and two of the servants to the cottage at Witley tomorrow, and to be the mistress of the great establishment, if you will, and mother to the children till I come; that proves how bad I think your influence is for them, doesn't it, you unkind old dear?"—and she stooped and kissed Mrs. Baines.

Aunt Anne was delighted, and consented at once.

"I shall never forget your putting this confidence in me. You have proved your affection for me most truly," she said. "My dear Florence, your children shall have the most loving care that it is in my power to give them. I will look after everything till you come; more zealously than you yourself could. Tell me, love, where do you say the cottage is situated?"

"It is near Witley, it is on the direct Portsmouth road; a sweet little cottage with a garden, and fir woods stretching on either side."

"And how far is it from Portsmouth, my love?" Mrs. Baines asked eagerly.

Florence divined the meaning of the question instantly.

"Oh, I don't know, Aunt Anne; after Witley comes Hindhead, and then Liphook, and then Petersfield, and then — then I don't know. Liphook is the place where Mr. Wimple" — the old lady winked to herself — "has friends and sometimes goes to stay."

"And how far is that?"

"About six miles, I think — six or seven."

"Thank you, my love; and now if you will allow me I will retire. I must make preparations for my journey, which is indeed a delightful anticipation."

Florence never forgot the October morning on which she took Aunt Anne and the children to Witley. They went from Waterloo. She thought of Walter and the day they had spent at Windsor, and of that last one on which they had gone together to Southampton, and she had returned alone. "Oh, my darling," she said to herself, "may you grow well and strong, and come back to us soon again."

Mrs. Baines, too, seemed full of memories. She looked up and down the platform; she stood for a moment dreamily by the book-stall before it occurred to her to buy a cheap illustrated paper to amuse Catty and Monty on the journey.

"My love," she said to Florence, with a little sigh, "a railway station is fraught with many recollections of meeting and parting —"

"And meeting again," said Florence, longingly thinking of Walter.

"Yes, my love," the old lady answered tenderly, "and may yours with your dear one be soon."

There were three miles to drive from Witley to the cottage. A long white road,

with fir woods on either side. Gaps in the firs, and glimpses of the Surrey hills, distant and blue, of hanging woods and deep valleys. The firs came to an end; and there were cliffs of gravel full of the holes of sand-martins. More woods, then hedges of blackberry bushes, bare enough now; gorse full of late bloom, heather faded and turning from russet to black. Here and there a solitary house, masses of oak and larch and fir; patches of sunshine; long wastes of shade, and the road going on and on.

"Here we are at last," Florence said, as they stopped before a red-brick cottage that stood only a few yards back from the road. On either side of it was a fir plantation. There was a gravel pathway round the house, but the other paths were covered with tan. Behind stretched a wilderness of garden almost entirely uncultivated. There was a little footway that wound through it in and out among beeches and larches and firs and oaks, and stopped at last on the ridge of a dip that could hardly be called a valley.

"Sometimes," said Florence, as they walked about, half an hour later, while the servants were busy within, "we go down the dip and up the other side, and so get over to Hindhead. It is nearer than going there by the road."

"Our house is over there," the children said.

"Their house," explained Florence, "is a little, lonely, thatched shed, half a mile away. We don't know who made it. It is in a lovely part on the other side of the dip, among the straggling trees. Perhaps some one tethered a cow in it once. The children call it their house now, because one day they had tea there. After I return next week, we must try to walk across to it."

But the old lady's eyes were turned towards the distance.

"And the road in front of the house," she asked, "where does that go to?"

"It winds round the Devil's Punch Bowl, and over Hindhead, and on through Liphook and Petersfield to Portsmouth."

Aunt Anne did not answer, she looked still more intently into the distance, and gave a long sigh.

"It is most exhilarating to be out of London again, my dear Florence," she said. "I sincerely trust it will prove beneficial to your dear ones. I was born in the country, and I hope that some day I shall die in it. London is most oppressive after a time."

"I like London," Florence answered;

"still it does now and then feel like a prison."

"And the rows and rows of houses are the prison bars, my love. May we enter the cottage?" she asked suddenly. She was evidently tired; she stooped, and looked older and more worn than usual.

"Poor old dear!" Florence thought. "I hope she is not worrying about Madame Celestine's bill, and that she will soon hear from Sir William Rammage. Then she will be happier."

It was a little house, simple inside as well as out, with tiny rooms, plainly furnished. The dining-room had been newly done up, with cretonne curtains and a dado, and a buttery-hatch in which Florence took a certain pride as something rather grand for so small a place. The drawing-room was old-fashioned; a stiff, roomy sofa with hard, flat cushions at one end; at the other a sweet, jangling piano. There were corner cupboards with china bowls of pot-pourri on them; on either side of the fireplace a gaunt, high-backed easy-chair, and on the left of each chair an old-fashioned screen on which was worked a peacock. Aunt Anne stopped on the threshold.

It seemed to Florence as if the room recognized the old lady, as if it had been waiting knowing that she would come. There was something about it that said more plainly than any words could have said that the hands were still that had first arranged it, and many footsteps had gone out from its doorway that would never come in at it more.

"It always depresses me," Florence explained; "but it is just as we found it. We re-furnished the dining-room, and sit there a good deal. It is more cheerful than this. Come up-stairs" — and she led the way.

The bedrooms were all small too, save one in front, that seemed to match the drawing-room. It looked like a room to die in. A quaint four-post bedstead with dark chintz curtains, a worm-eaten bureau, a sampler worked in Berlin wool and framed in black cherry-wood hanging over the fireplace.

"This is the best room," Florence said, "and we keep it for visitors. There is a little one, meant to be a dressing-room I suppose, leading out of it," and she went to a bright little nook with a bed in it. "I always feel that the best bedroom and the drawing-room belong to a past world, and the rest of the house to the present one."

"It is like your life and mine, my dar-

ling; mine to the past and yours to the present."

"I think you ought to sleep in the best room, Aunt Anne."

"No, my love," the old lady interrupted, "let me have this little one which is next it. When you require the other, if I am still with you, I can lock the door between. The best one is too grand for me; but sometimes while it is empty I will go in, if you have no objection, and look out at the fir-trees and the road that stretches right and left —"

"I like doing that," Florence interrupted. "It always sets me thinking — the road from the city to the sea."

"From the city to the sea," the old lady repeated, "from the voices to the silences."

"Aunt Anne, we mustn't grow sentimental" — Florence began. There was the sound of a tinkling bell. It seemed to come at an opportune moment. "Oh, happy sound!" she laughed; "it means that our meal is ready. Catty, darling," she called, "Monty, my son, roast chicken is waiting down-stairs. Auntie and mummy are quite ready; come, dear babes" — and patter, patter, came the sound of the little feet, and together they all went down.

An hour later the fly came to the door; it was time for Florence to start on her way back to town.

"I shall be with you at latest on Tuesday. Perhaps, dear Aunt Anne, if you don't mind taking care of the bad children so long, I may go on Saturday for a day or two to an old schoolfellow," she said. "Then I should not be here till the middle of next week."

"Dear child, you do, indeed, put confidence in me," Mrs. Baines answered faintly.

"And, Aunt Anne, I have ordered most things in, but the tradespeople come every day if there is anything more you want, and here is some money. Four pounds, I think, will carry you through; and here is a little book in which to put down your expenses. I always keep a most careful account, you don't mind doing so either, do you?"

"My love, anything you wish will be a pleasure to me."

"If you please, ma'am," said Jane, entering, "the driver says you must start at once if you want to catch this train."

"Then good-bye dear Aunt Anne; good-bye, dear dickie-birds; be happy together. You shall see me very soon again; send me a letter every other day;" and with many embraces Florence was allowed to

get out of the door. But Aunt Anne and the children ran excitedly after her to the gate, and helped her into the little wagonette, and kissed their hands and waved their handkerchiefs as she drove off, and called, "Good-bye, good-bye;" and so, watching them, Florence went along the white road towards the station.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE days that followed were busy ones for Florence — busy in a domestic sense, so that the history of them does not concern us here. Mr. Fisher called one afternoon; by a strange coincidence it was while Ethel Dunlop was helping Florence with an inventory of china. Miss Dunlop readily promised to visit his mother, but she did not show any particular interest in the editor.

"He has been so kind," Florence said, "and don't you think he is very agreeable?"

"Oh yes, but you know, Florrie dear, he has a very square face."

"Well?"

"It is a good thing he never married, he would have been very obstinate."

"But why do you say never did? — as if he never would. He is only forty-odd."

"Only forty-odd!" laughed Ethel — "only a million. If a man is over eight-and-twenty he might as well be over eighty, it is mere modesty that he is not."

"Walter is over thirty, and just as fascinating as ever."

Florence was rather indignant.

"Ah, yes, but he is married, and married men take such a long time to grow old. By the way, Mr. Fisher said something about a theatre party, when his mother is here. Do you think I might ask him to invite George Dighton as well? George is very fond of theatres."

Before Florence could reply, a carriage stopped at the door; it looked familiar, it reminded her of Aunt Anne in her triumphant days. But a strange lady descended from it now, and was shown up-stairs to the drawing-room, in which Aunt Anne had sat and related her woes and known her triumphs.

"Mrs. North, ma'am," said the servant, and then Florence understood.

She left Ethel in the dining-room with the inventory, and went up to receive the visitor. Mrs. North was as pretty as Aunt Anne had declared her to be; a mere girl to look at, tall and slim. Florence thought it was quite natural that her husband should like her to have a chaperon.

"I came to see Mrs. Baines," she said, coming forward in a shy, hesitating manner, "but hearing that she was in the country I ventured to ask for you. What have you done with the dear old lady?" Florence looked at her, fascinated by her beauty, by her clothes, that seemed to be a mixture of fur and lace and perfume, by the soft brown hair that curled low on her forehead, by the sweet blue eyes — by every bit of her. "You know, probably, that she was very angry when she left me? I thought by this time that she would, perhaps, forgive me and make it up; so I came." She said it with a penitent air.

"I am afraid she is very angry," Florence answered, half laughing, for the pretty woman before her did not seem like a stranger. "Do you want her again?"

"Oh no," and Mrs. North shook her head emphatically. "No, indeed, that would be impossible; she led us a terrible life. But we loved her. I think we could have put up with anything if she had not quarrelled with the servants."

"I was afraid it was that."

"Oh yes," sighed Mrs. North, "she was horribly autocratic with them — 'autocratic' is her own word. At last she quarrelled with Hetty and wanted me to send her away — to send away Hetty, who is a born treasure, and cooks like an angel. It would have broken our hearts — we couldn't let her go, it was impossible, so the old lady fled."

"I am very sorry. You were so very kind to her, she always said that."

"I loved her," Mrs. North answered, with a little sigh; "she was so like my dear dead mother grown old, that was the secret of her attraction for us; but she ruled us with a rod of iron that grew more and more unyielding every day; and yet she was very kind. She was always giving us presents."

"Oh yes," said Florence, in a despairing voice.

"We have had the bills for them since," Mrs. North went on, with a comical air. "She used to say that I was very frivolous," she added suddenly. "She thought it wicked of me to enjoy life while my husband was away. But he's fifty, Mrs. Hibbert; one may have an affection for a husband of fifty, but one can't be in love with him."

"If she were very nice she would not have made that remark to me, whom she never saw before," Florence thought, beginning to dislike her a little.

"Of course I am sorry he is away," Mrs. North said, as if she perfectly un-



derstood the impression she was making. "I shall be glad when he returns. He will rule me then. I took Mrs. Baines because he wished me to have an old lady about me; but I wanted my own way. I liked her to have hers when it amused me to see her have it; when it didn't I wanted to have mine." And Mrs. North looked up with two blue eyes that fascinated and repelled, and laughed a merry, uncontrolled laugh like a child's. "Oh, she was very droll."

"Perhaps it is very rude of me to say it," Florence said primly, for deep in her heart there was a great deal of primness, "but I can understand Mr. North wishing you to have a chaperon, you are very young to be left alone."

"Oh yes, and very careless, I know that. And Mrs. Baines used to provoke me into shocking her. I could shock her so easily, and did — don't you know how one loves power for good or ill over a human being?"

"No, I don't," Florence answered a little stiffly.

"I do, I love it best of all things in the world, whether it leads me uphill or downhill. But I am intruding," for she saw a set, cold look coming over Florence's face. "Let me tell you why I asked for you. I have been so embarrassed about Mrs. Baines. She gave us presents and she bought all sorts of things; but she didn't pay for them. These bills came, and the people wanted their money." She pulled a little roll out of her pocket. "She probably forgot them, and I thought it would be better to pay them, especially as I owed her some money when she left which she would not take;" and she laughed out again, but this time there was an odd sound in her voice. "They are from florists and all sorts of people."

Florence looked over the bills quickly and almost guiltily. There were the pots of fern and the flowers that had been sent to her and the children after Aunt Anne's first visit; and there were the roses with which she had triumphantly entered on the night of the dinner-party. "Oh, poor old lady!" she exclaimed sadly.

"They are paid," Mrs. North said. "Don't be distressed about them and many others — lace-handkerchiefs, shoes, all sorts of things. Don't tell her. She would think I had taken a liberty or committed a solecism," and she made a little wry face. "But what I really wanted to see you about, Mrs. Hibbert, was Madame Celestine's bill. I am afraid I can't pay that all by myself; it is too long. Madame Celestine, of course, is sweetly miserable,

for she thinks the old lady has vanished into space. She came to me yesterday. It seems that she went to you a few days ago, but you were out, and she was glad of it when she discovered that Mrs. Baines was your aunt, for she doesn't want to offend you. She came to me again to-day. She is very miserable. I believe it will turn her hair grey. Oh, it is too funny!"

"I don't think it is at all funny."

"But indeed it is, for I don't believe Mrs. Baines will ever be able to pay the fifteen pounds; in fact, we know that she won't. Probably it is worrying her a good deal. I have been wondering whether something could not be done; if you and I, for instance, were to pay it between us."

"You are very good, Mrs. North," Florence said against her will.

"Oh no, but I am sorry for her, and it vexes and worries me to think of her being annoyed. I want to get rid of that vexation, and will pay something to do so. That is what most generosity comes to," Mrs. North went on, with mock cynicism, "the purchase of a pleasant feeling for oneself, or the getting rid of an unpleasant one. There is little really unselfish goodness in the world, and when one meets it, as a rule, it isn't charming, it isn't fascinating, when one feels that one would rather be without it." She rose as she spoke. "Well," she asked, "what shall we do? I'll pay one half of the old lady's bill if you will pay the other half."

"You are very good," Florence repeated wonderingly.

"No; but I expect you are," and Mrs. North showed two rows of little white teeth. "I should think you are a model of virtue," she added, with an almost child-like air of frankness, which made it impossible to take offence at her words, though Florence felt that at best she was only regarded as the possessor of a quality that just before her visitor had denounced.

"Why," she asked, smiling against her will, "do I look like a model of virtue?"

"Oh yes, you are almost Madonna-like," Mrs. North said, with a sigh. "I wish I were like you, only — only I think I should get very tired of myself. I get tired now; but a reaction comes. But a reaction to the purely good must be tame at best."

"You are very clever," Florence said, almost without knowing it, and shrinking from her again.

"How do you know? My husband says I am clever, but I don't think I am. I am alive. So many people are merely in the preface to being alive, and never get any



farther. I am well in the middle of the book; and am eager, so eager that sometimes I long to eat up the whole world so that I may know the taste of everything. Do you understand that?"

"No. I am content with my slice."

"Ah, that is it. I am not content with mine. You have your husband and children."

"But you have a husband."

"Yes, I have a husband, too; a funny old husband, a long way off"—Florence hated her—"and no children. I amused myself with the old lady—Mrs. Baines—till she fled from me. Now I try other things. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," Florence said.

As Mrs. North was going out of the door she turned and asked, "Have you many friends—women friends?"

"Yes, a great many, thank you," Mrs. Hibbert said, with a little haughty inclination of the head. The haughtiness seemed to amuse Mrs. North, for the merry look came over her face again, but only for a moment.

"I thought you had," she answered. "I have none; I don't want them. Good-bye."

It was nearly dark, and the one servant left to help Florence get the house ready had neglected to light the gas on the staircase. Mrs. North groped her way down.

"I want to tell you something," she said. "You said just now that I was clever. I don't think I am, but I can divine people's thoughts pretty easily. You are very good, I think; but consider this, your goodness is of no use if you are not good to others; good to women especially. The good of goodness is that you can wrap others inside it. It ought to be like a big cloak that you have on a cold night, while the shivering person next to you has none. If you don't make use of your goodness," she went on with a catch in her breath, "what is the good of it?—I seem to be talking paradoxes—you prove how beautiful it is perhaps, but that is all—you make it like the swan that sings its own death-song. One listens and watches, and goes away to think of things more comprehensible, and to do them. Good-bye, Mrs. Hibbert," she said gently, and almost as if she were afraid she held out her hand. Florence took it, a little wonder-struck. "You are like a Madonna, very like one, as I said just now, but though you are older than I am, I think I know more about some things than you

do—good and bad. Madonnas never know the world very well. Give my love to the old lady, and say I hope she has forgiven me. I am going to Monte Carlo next week, tell her that too. It will shock her. Say that I should like to have taken her," and with a last little laugh she went out—into the darkness it seemed to Florence.

But the next minute there were two flashing lamps before the house; there was the banging of a door, and Mrs. North was driven away.

Florence went slowly back to the dining-room and the inventory. Ethel Dunlop had gone. She was glad of it, for she wanted to think over her strange visitor.

"I don't understand her," she said to herself. "She is unlike any one I ever met; she fascinated and repelled me. I felt as if I wanted to kiss her, and yet the touch of her hand made me shiver." Then she thought of Madame Celestine's bill, and of Aunt Anne, and wished that the dress had not been bought, especially for the dinner-party; it made her feel as if she had been the unwitting cause of Mrs. Baines's extravagance. She looked into the fire, and remembered the events of that wonderful evening, and thought of Walter away, and the bills at home that would have to be paid at Christmas. And she thought of her winter cloak that was three years old and shabby, and of the things she had longed to buy for the children. Above all she thought of the visions she had had of saving little by little, and putting her savings away in a very safe place, until she had a cosy sum with which some day to give Walter a pleasant surprise, and suggest that they should go off together for "a little spree," as he would call it, to Paris or Switzerland. The fire burnt low, the red coals grew dull, the light from the street lamp outside seemed to come searching into the room as though it were looking for some one who was not there. She thought of Walter's letter safe in her pocket. He himself was probably at Malta by this time—getting stronger and stronger in the sunshine. Dear Walter, how generous he was; he, too, was a little bit reckless sometimes. She wondered if he inherited this last quality from Aunt Anne. She thought of her children at Witley having tea, most likely with cakes and jam in abundance; and of Aunt Anne in her glory. She wondered if Mr. Wimple had turned up. "Poor Aunt Anne," she sighed, and there was a long bill in her mind. Presently she rose,

lighted a candle, drew down the blind—shutting out the glare from the street lamp—and going slowly to the Davenport in the corner, unlocked it, opened a little secret drawer, and looked in. There were three five-pound notes there—the remainder of her mother's gift. "I wonder if Mrs. North had Madame Celestine's bill," she thought. "But it doesn't matter; she said it was fifteen pounds. I can send her the amount."

A couple of hours later, while she was in the very act of putting a cheque into an envelope, a note arrived. It had been left by hand; it was scented with violets, and ran thus:—

"DEAR MRS. HIBBERT, — I have ventured to pay Madame Celestine. I determined to do so while I was with you just now; but was afraid to tell you, that was why I changed the conversation so abruptly. Please don't let the old lady know that it is my doing, for she might be angry; but she was very good to me, and I am glad to do this for her. Forgive all the strange things I said this afternoon, and don't trouble to acknowledge this.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. NORTH.

"P.S. — I enclose receipt."

#### CHAPTER X.

IT was not till Tuesday afternoon in the week following that Florence got back to Witley.

Mrs. Burnett was at the station, sitting in a little governess-cart drawn by a donkey.

"I am waiting for my husband," she explained; "he generally comes by this train, and I drive him home, donkey permitting. It is a dear little donkey, and we are so fond of him."

"A dear little cart, too," Florence answered as she stood by its side, talking. "I have been hoping that you would come to see me, Mrs. Burnett; we are going to be here for six or seven weeks."

"I know, Mr. Fisher told me," Mrs. Burnett replied in her sweet and rather intense voice, "and we are so sorry that your visit takes place just while we are away. I am going to Devonshire to-morrow morning to stay with my mother while my husband goes to Scotland. I am so sorry,"—she had a way of drawing out her words as if to give them emphasis. Florence liked to look at Mrs. Burnett's eyes while she spoke, they always seemed to attest that every word she said expressed the absolute meaning and intention

in her mind. Her listeners gained a sense of restfulness which comes from being in the presence of a real person from whom they might take bitter or sweet, certain of its reality. "I hoped from Mr. Fisher's note that you had arrived before, and ventured to call on Saturday."

"Did you see Mrs. Baines?"

"Only for a moment. What a charming old lady!—such old-fashioned courtesy, it was like being sent back fifty years to listen to her. She wanted me to stay, but I refused, for she was just setting off for a drive with your children and her nephew."

"Setting off for a drive?" Florence repeated.

"Yes, she had Steggall's wagonette from the Blue Lion, and was going to Guildford shopping. She said she meant to buy some surprises for you."

"Oh," said Florence meekly, and her heart sank. "Did you say that she had a nephew with her?"

"Well, I supposed it was a nephew, unless she has a son; a tall, fair young man, who looks delicate, and walks as if his legs were not very strong."

"Oh yes, I know," Florence answered as she signed to the fly she had engaged to come nearer to the donkey-cart so that she might not waste a minute. "He is a friend; he is no relation. Good-bye, Mrs. Burnett; I am sorry you are going away. I suppose you are waiting for the fast train, as Mr. Burnett did not come by this one?"

"Yes, it is due in twenty minutes. Good-bye; so sorry not to have been at home during your visit. Oh, Mrs. Hibbert, do you think your children would like to have the use of this cart while we are away? The donkey is so gentle and so good."

"It is too kind of you to think of it," Florence began, beaming; for she thought of how Catty and Monty would shout for joy at having a donkey-cart to potter about in; and in her secret soul, though she felt it would not do to betray it, she was nearly as much pleased as they would be. Florence often had an inward struggle for the dignity with which she felt her matronly position should be supported.

"It will be such a pleasure to lend it them. It's a dear little donkey, so good and gentle. It doesn't go well," Mrs. Burnett added, in an apologetic tone; "but it's a dear little donkey, and does everything else well." And over this remark Florence pondered much as she drove to the cottage.

As she caught sight of the house she wondered if she had been absent more than half an hour, or at all. She had left it in the afternoon more than a week ago, and the children had stood out in the roadway dancing and waving their handkerchiefs till she was out of sight. As she came back, there they stood dancing and waving their handkerchiefs again. They shouted for joy as she got out of the fly.

"Welcome, my darling, welcome," Aunt Anne, who was behind them, exclaimed. "These dear children and I have been watching more than an hour for you. Enter your house, my love. It is indeed a privilege to be here to receive you."

"It is a privilege to come back to so warm a welcome," Florence said when, having embraced her children and Aunt Anne, she was allowed to enter the cottage; "and how comfortable and nice it looks!" she exclaimed, as she stopped at the dining-room doorway. There was a wood fire blazing, and the tea set out, and the water in the silver kettle singing, and hot cakes in a covered dish in the fender. Flowers set off the table and in the pots about the room were boughs of autumn leaves. It all looked cosy and inviting, and wore a festival air — festival that Florence knew had been made for her. She turned and kissed the old lady gratefully. "Dear Aunt Anne," she said, and that was thanks enough.

"I thought, my love, that you would like to partake of a substantial tea with your dear children on your return. Your later evening meal I have arranged to be a very slender one."

"But you are too good, Aunt Anne."

"It is you who have been too good to me," the old lady answered tenderly. "And now, my darling, let me take you up to your chamber; it is ready for your reception."

There was a triumphant note in her voice that prepared Florence for the fire in her grate and the bouquet on the dressing-table, and all the little arrangements that Mrs. Baines had devised to add to her comfort. It was very cheery, she thought; Aunt Anne had a knack of making one enjoy a home-coming. She pulled out Walter's letter and sat for a few moments alone over the bedroom fire, and read it and kissed it and put it back into her pocket. Then she looked round the cosy room again, and noticed a little packet on the corner of the drawers. Aunt Anne must have placed it there when she went out of the room. On it was written, *For my darling Florence*. "Oh," she said,

"it's another present," and regretfully her fingers undid the string. Inside the white paper was a little pin-cushion covered with blue velvet, and having round it a rim of silver filigree work. Attached to it was a little note which ran thus:—

"MY DARLING, — Accept this little token of my love and gratitude. I feel that there is no way in which I can better prove how much I appreciated your generous gift to me than by spending a portion of it on a token of my affection to you. I trust you will honor my little gift with your acceptance."

"Oh," said Florence again, in despair, "I wonder if she has once thought of Madame Celestine's bill or the others. What is the good of giving her money if one gets it back in the shape of presents?"

But she could not bear to treat the old lady's generosity with coldness. So Aunt Anne was thanked, and the cushion admired, and a happy little party gathered round the tea-table.

"And have you had any visitors except Mrs. Burnett?" Florence asked artfully, when the meal was over.

"We have had Mr. Wimple," Aunt Anne said; "he is far from well, my love, and is trying to recruit at Liphook."

"Oh yes, he has friends there."

"No, my love, not now. He is at present lodging with an old retainer."

"And have you been to see him?"

"No, dear Florence, he preferred that I should not do so."

"We took him lots of rides," said Monty.

"And Aunt Anne gave him a present," said Catty, "and he put it into his pocket and never looked at it. He didn't know what was inside the paper, — we did, didn't we, auntie?"

"My dear children," Mrs. Baines said, "if your mother will give you permission you had better go to the nursery. It is past your hour for bed, my dear ones."

The children looked a little dismayed, but they never dreamt of disobeying.

"Was it wrong to say you gave him a present?" asked Catty, with the odd perception of childhood, as she put up her face to be kissed.

"My dears," answered Aunt Anne sweetly, "in my day children did not talk with their elders unless they were invited to do so."

"We didn't know," said Catty ruefully.

"No, my darlings, I know that. Bless you," continued the old lady sweetly, "and good-night, my dear ones. Ur<sub>ty</sub>

your pillows you will each find a chocolate which auntie placed there for you this morning."

"And did you enjoy the drives?" Florence asked, when the children had gone.

"Yes, my dear, thank you," Mrs. Baines was silent for a moment. Then she raised her head, and, as if she had gathered courage, went on in a slightly louder tone, "I thought it would do your dear children good, Florence, to see the country, and, therefore, I ventured to take them some drives. Occasionally Mr. Wimple was so kind as to accompany us."

"And I hope they did him good, too," Florence said, trying not to betray her amusement.

"Yes, my love, I trust they did."

Then Florence remembered the bills paid by Mrs. North. They were all in a sealed envelope in her pocket, but she could not gather the courage to deliver it. She wanted to ask after Sir William Ram-mage, too, to know whether he had written yet and settled the question of an allowance; but for that, also, her courage failed—the old lady always resented questions. Then she remembered Mr. Fisher's remark about Alfred Wimple's writing, and thought it would please Aunt Anne to hear of it.

"Mr. Fisher says that Mr. Wimple writes very well; he has been doing some reviewing for the paper."

Mrs. Baines winked with satisfaction.

"I am quite sure he writes well, my love," she answered quickly, "he is a most accomplished man."

"And is there no more news to relate, Aunt Anne?" Florence asked; "no more doings during my absence?"

"No, my love, I think not."

"Then I have some news for you. I hope it won't vex you, for I know you were very angry with her. Mrs. North has been to see me. She really came to see you, but when she found you had gone out of town she asked for me."

Mrs. Baines looked almost alarmed and very angry.

"It was most presumptuous of her," she exclaimed.

"But why, Aunt Anne?" Florence asked, astonished.

"She had no right; she had not my permission."

"But, dear Aunt Anne, she came to see you; and why should it be presumptuous?"

"I should prefer not to discuss the subject. I have expressed my opinion, and that is sufficient," Mrs. Baines said

haughtily. "I repeat that it was most presumptuous of her to call upon you—a liberty, a—Florence," she went on with sudden alarm in her voice, "I hope you did not promise to go to see her."

"She never asked me."

"I should have put my veto on it if she had. My dear, you must trust to my more mature judgment in some things. I know the world better than you do. Believe me, I have my reasons for every word I say. I treated Mrs. North with the greatest clemency and consideration, though she frequently forgot what was due to me. I was blind while I stayed with her, Florence, and did not see many things that I do now; for I am not prone to think ill of any one. You know that, my love, do you not? I must beg that you will never, on any account, mention Mrs. North's name again in my presence."

Florence felt as if the envelope would burn a hole in her pocket. It was impossible to deliver it now. Perhaps after all the wisest way would be to say nothing about it. She had an idea that Aunt Anne frequently forgot all about her bills as soon as she had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to make them any longer. She searched about in her mind for some other topic of conversation. It was often difficult to find a subject to talk about with Aunt Anne, for the old lady never suggested one herself, and except of past experiences and old-world recollections she seldom seemed sufficiently interested to talk much. Happily, as it seemed for the moment, Jane entered with the house-keeping books. They were always brought in on a Tuesday, and paid on a Wednesday morning. Florence was very particular on this point. They usually gave her a bad half-hour, for she could never contrive to keep them down as much as she desired. That week, however, she reflected that they could not be very bad; besides, she had left four pounds with Aunt Anne, which must be almost intact, unless the drives had been paid out of them; but even then there would be plenty left to more than cover the books. The prospect of getting through her accounts easily cheered Florence, for she always found a satisfaction in balancing them.

"They are heavy this week, ma'am," Jane said, not without a trace of triumph in her voice, "on account of the chickens and the cream and the company."

"The chickens and the cream and the company," laughed Florence, as Jane went out of the room; "it sounds like a line

from a comic poem. What does she mean?"

Aunt Anne winked as if to give herself nerve.

"Jane was very impertinent to me one day, my love, because I felt sure that after the fatigue of the journey from town, and the change of air, you would prefer that your delicately nurtured children should eat chicken and have cream with their second course every day for dinner, instead of roast mutton and milk pudding. White meat is infinitely preferable for delicate digestions."

"Yes, dear Aunt Anne," Florence said sweetly, and she felt a sudden dread of opening the books, "you are quite right." What did a few chickens and a little cream matter in comparison to the poor old lady's feelings, she thought. "And if you had company, too, of course you wanted to have a smarter table. Whom have you been entertaining, you dear and dissipated Aunt Anne?"

"My dear Florence, I have entertained no one but Mr. Wimple. He is a friend of yours and your dear Walter's, and I tried to prove to him that I was worthy to belong to you, by showing him such hospitality as lay in my power."

"Yes, dear, and it was very kind of you," Florence said tenderly. After all, why should Aunt Anne be worried through that horrid Mr. Wimple? Walter would have invited him if he had found him in the neighborhood, and why should not Aunt Anne do so in peace, if it pleased her? Of course, now that she herself had returned she could do as she liked about him. She looked at the books. They were not so very bad, after all.

"Shall we make up our accounts now, and get it over, or in the morning?" she asked.

"I should prefer the morning," Aunt Anne said meekly. "To-night, love, you must be tired, and I am also fatigued with the excitement consequent on seeing you."

"What a shame, poor Aunt Anne!" Florence said brightly. "I have worn you out."

"Only with happiness, my dear," said the old lady fondly.

Florence put away her books, and stroked Aunt Anne's shoulder as she passed.

"We will do our work in the morning," she said.

"Yes, my darling, in the morning. In the afternoon I may possibly have an engagement."

Florence longed to ask where, but a certain stiffness in Aunt Anne's manner made it impossible.

"Have you any news from London?" she ventured to inquire, for she was longing to know about Sir William Rammage.

"No, my love, I have no news from London," Mrs. Baines answered, and she evidently meant to say no more.

In the morning much time was taken up with the arrival of the donkey-cart and the delight of the children. A great basket of apples was inside the cart, and on the top was a little note explaining that they came from Mrs. Burnett's garden, and she hoped the children might like them. Aunt Anne was as much pleased with the donkey as the rest of the party.

"There is a rusticity in the appearance of a donkey," she explained, "that always gives me a sense of being really in the country."

"Not when you meet him in London, I fear," Florence said.

Mrs. Baines considered for a moment. She seemed to resent the observation.

"No, my love, of course not in London; I am speaking of the country," she said reprovingly; then she added, "I should enjoy a little drive occasionally myself if you would trust me with the cart, my love. It would remind me of days gone by. I sometimes drove one at Rottingdean. You are very fortunate, my dear one, in having so few sorrows to remember — for I trust you have few. It always saddens me to think of the past. Let us go indoors."

Florence put her arm through the old lady's, and led her in. Then she thought of the books again; it would be a good time to make them up.

"I am always particular about my accounts, you know, Aunt Anne," she said in an apologetic tone.

"Yes, my love," answered the old lady; "I admire you for it."

Florence looked at the figures; they made her wince a little, but she said nothing.

"The bill for the wagonettes, Aunt Anne?" she asked.

"That belongs to me, my dear."

"Oh no, I can't allow that."

"My love, I made an arrangement with Mr. Steggall, and that is sufficient."

Again Aunt Anne's tone forbade any discussion. Florence felt sure that one day Steggall's bill would arrive, but she said nothing.

"Do you mind giving me the change out of the four pounds?" she asked very



gently. Mrs. Baines went slowly over to her work-basket, and took up a little dress she was making for Catty.

"Not now, my love; I want to get on with my work."

"Perhaps I could get your account-book, Aunt Anne; then I should know how much there is left."

Mrs. Baines began to sew.

"I did not put anything down in the account-book," she said doggedly. "I considered, dear Florence, that my time was too valuable. It always seems to me great nonsense to put down every penny one spends."

"It is a great check on oneself."

"I do not wish to keep a check on myself," Mrs. Baines answered scornfully.

"Could you tell me how much you have left?" Florence asked meekly. "I hope there may be enough to help us through the week."

She did not like to say that she thought it must be nearly all left.

"Florence," burst out the old lady with the injured tone in her voice that Florence knew so well, "I have but ten shillings left in the world. If you wish to take it from me you must do so; but it is not like you, my darling."

"Oh, Aunt Anne," Florence began, bewildered, "I am sure you — I did not mean — I did not know —"

"I'm sure you did not," Mrs. Baines said, with a sense of injury still in her voice, "but there is nothing so terrible or so galling to a sensitive nature like mine — and your dear Walter's takes after it, Florence, I am sure — as to be worried about money matters."

"But indeed, Aunt Anne, I only thought that — that —" but here she stopped, not knowing how to go on for a moment; "I thought that perhaps the unpaid books represented the household expenses," she added at last. Really, something must be done to make the old lady careful, she thought.

"My love," Mrs. Baines said, with an impatient shake of her head, "I cannot go into the details of every little expense. I am not equal to it. Everything you do not find charged in the books has either been paid, or will be charged, by my request, to my private account, and you must leave it so. I really cannot submit to being made to give an explanation of every penny I spend. I am not a child, Florence. I am not an inexperienced girl; I had kept house before, my love — if you will allow me to say so — before you were

born." The treble note had come into Aunt Anne's voice; it was a sign that tears were not far off.

But Florence could not feel as compassionate as she desired. She smarted under the loss of her money. There was nothing at all to represent it, and Aunt Anne did not seem to have the least idea that it had been of any consequence. Florence got up and put the books away, looking across at Aunt Anne while she did so. The expression on the old lady's face was set, and almost angry; her lips were firmly closed. She was working at Catty's little dress. She was a beautiful needle-woman, and embroidered little cuffs and collars on the children's things that were a source of joyful pride to Florence. But even the host of stitches would not pay the week's bills. If only Aunt Anne could be made to understand the value of money, Florence thought — but it was no use thinking, for her foolish, housekeeping heart was full of domestic woe. She went up-stairs to her own room, and, like a real woman who makes no pretence to strong-mindedness, sat down to cry.

"If Walter were only back," she sobbed, as she rubbed her tearful face against the cushions on the back of the basket-chair by the fireside. "If he were here I should not mind, I might even laugh then. But after I have tried and tried so hard to save and to spend so little, it is hard, and I don't know what to do." She pulled out Walter's letter again and kissed it by way of getting a little comfort, and as she did so, felt the envelope containing the receipts of the bills Mrs. North had paid. She did not believe that Aunt Anne cared whether they were paid or not paid. She always seemed to think that the classes who were what she pleased to consider beneath her, were invented simply for her use and convenience, and that protest in any shape on their part was mere impertinence.

The day dragged by. The children prevented the dinner-hour from being as awkward as it might have been. Mrs. Baines was cold and courteous. Florence had no words to say. She would make it up with the old lady in the evening, when they were alone, she thought. Of course she would have to make it up. Meanwhile she would go for a long walk, it would do her good. She could think things over quietly, as she tramped along a lonely road between the hedges of faded gorse and heather. But it was late in the afternoon before she had energy enough to start.



Mrs. Baines was in the dining-room, reading the morning paper, which had only just come, when Florence put her head in at the door. She was evidently excited and agitated; she held the paper in one hand, and looked out towards the garden. But she seemed to have forgotten all the unpleasantness of the morning when she spoke.

"My love, are you going out?" she asked.

"I thought you had an engagement, Aunt Anne, and would not want me."

"That is true, my dear, and I shall be glad to be alone for a little while, if you will forgive me for saying it. There is an announcement in the paper that gives me the deepest pain, Florence. Sir William Rammage is ill again—he is confined to his room."

"Oh, poor Aunt Anne."

"I must write to him instantly. I felt sure there was some good reason for his not having told me his decision in regard to the allowance." Then, as if she had suddenly remembered the little scrimmage of the morning, she went on quickly, "My love, give me a kiss. Do not think that I am angry with you. I never could be that; but it is unpleasant at my time of life to be made to give an exact account of money. You will remember that, won't you dear? I should never expect it from you. If I had hundreds and hundreds a year I would share them with you and your darlings, and I would ask you for no accounts, dear Florence. I should think that the money was as much yours as mine. You know it, don't you, my love?"

"Yes, dear, I think I do," Florence answered, and kissed the old lady affectionately, thinking that perhaps, after all, she had made rather too much fuss.

"Then let us forget about it, my darling," Mrs. Baines said, with the gracious smile that always had its influence; "I could never remember anything long of you, but your kindness and hospitality. Believe me, I am quite sure that you did not mean to wound me this morning. It was your zealous care of dear Walter's interests that made you for a moment forget what was due to me. I quite understand, my darling. Now go for your walk, and be assured that Aunt Anne loves you."

And Florence was dismissed, feeling as the children had felt the evening before when they had been sent to bed and told of the chocolate under their pillows.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE grey sky and the dim trees, the black hedges and the absolute stillness, all these proved excellent comforters to Florence. They made her philosophical and almost smiling again. It was only when an empty wagonette of Steggall's passed her that she remembered the vexations of the morning. "Poor old lady," she said to herself with almost a laugh, "in future she must not be trusted with money, that is all. If she only would not scold me and treat me like a child, I should not mind it so much. Of course when Walter does it, I like it; but I don't like it from Aunt Anne."

She had walked quite a long way. She was getting tired. The messengers of night were abroad, the stray breezes, the dark flecked clouds, the shadows loitering by the trees, the strange little sounds among the hedges by the wayside. Far off, beyond the wood, she heard a clock belonging to a big house strike six. It was time to hurry home. If she walked the two miles between herself and the cottage quickly, she would be in by half past six. At seven, after the children had gone to bed, she and Aunt Anne were to sit down to a little evening meal they called supper. They would be very cosy that night, they would linger over their food, and Aunt Anne should talk of by-gone days, and the quaint old world that always seemed to be just behind her.

It was rather dull in the country, Florence thought. In the summer, of course, the outdoor life made it delightful, but now there was so little to fill the days, only the children and the housekeeping, wonderings about Walter, and the writing of the bit of diary on very thin paper which she had promised to post out to him every week. She was not a woman who made an intellectual atmosphere for herself. She lived her life through her husband, read the same books, and drew her conclusions by the light of his. Now that he had gone the world seemed half empty, and very dull and tame. There was no glamour over anything. Perhaps it was this that had helped to make her a little unkind to Aunt Anne, for gradually she was persuading herself that she had been unkind. She wished Aunt Anne had an income of her own, and the home for which she had said she longed. It would be so much better for everybody.

When she was nearly home, a sudden dread seized her lest Mr. Wimple should be there, but this, she reflected, was not

likely. It was long past calling time, and Aunt Anne was too great a stickler for etiquette to allow him to take a liberty, as she would call it. So Florence quickened her steps, and entered her home bravely to the sound of the children's voices upstairs singing as they went to bed. A fire was blazing in the dining-room, and everything looked comfortable, just as it had the night before. But there was no sign of Aunt Anne. Probably she was up-stairs "getting ready," for a lace cap and bit of white at her throat and an extra formal, though not less affectionate, manner than usual Aunt Anne seemed to think a fitting accompaniment to the evening meal. Florence looked round the dining-room with a little pride of ownership. She was fond of the cottage, it was their very own, hers and Walter's; and how wise they had been to do up that particular room, it made every meal they ate in it a pleasure. That buttery-hatch too, it was absurd that it should be so, but really it was a secret joy to her. Suddenly her eye caught a package that had evidently come in her absence. A parcel of any sort was always exciting. This could not be another present from Aunt Anne? and she drew a short breath. Oh no, it had come by rail. Books. She knew what it was—some novels from Mr. Fisher. "How kind he is," she said gratefully; "he says so few words, but he does so many things. I really don't see why Ethel should not love him. I don't think she would find it difficult to do so," she thought, with the forgetfulness of womanhood for the days of girlish fancy.

"Mrs. Baines has not yet returned," the servant said, entering to arrange the table.

"Not returned! Is she out, then?"

"Yes, ma'am, she started half an hour after you did. Steggall's wagonette came for her."

Florence groaned inwardly.

"Do you know where she has gone?"

"I think she has gone to Guildford, ma'am, shopping; she often did while you were away. I heard her tell the driver to drive quickly to the station, as she feared she was late."

"Oh. Did any one call, Jane?"

"No, ma'am."

Then, once more, Florence delivered herself over to despair. Aunt Anne must have gone to buy more surprises, and if she had only ten shillings in the world it was quite clear she would have to get them on credit. Something would have to be done. The tradespeople would have to be warned. Walter must be written to,

and, if necessary, asked to cable over advice. Perhaps Sir William Rammage would interfere. In the midst of all her perturbation seven o'clock struck, and there was no Aunt Anne.

Florence was a healthy young woman, and she had had a long walk. The pangs of hunger assailed her vigorously, so, after resisting them till half past seven, she sat down to her little supper alone. Food has a soothing effect on an agitated mind, and a quarter of an hour later, though Aunt Anne had not appeared, Florence had come to the conclusion that she could not get very deeply into debt, because it was not likely that the tradespeople would trust her. Perhaps, too, after all, she had not gone to Guildford. Still, what could keep her out so late? The roads were dark and lonely, she knew no one in the neighborhood. It was to be hoped that nothing had happened to her, and, at this thought, Florence began to reproach herself again for all her unkindness of the morning. But while she was still reviewing her own conduct with much severity there was a soft patter, patter, along the gravel path outside, and a feeble ring at the bell. "That dissipated old lady!" laughed Florence to herself, only too delighted to think that she had returned safely at last.

A moment later Aunt Anne entered. She was a little breathless, her left eye winked more frequently than usual, there was an air of happy excitement in her manner. She entered the room quickly, and seated herself in the easy-chair with a sigh of relief.

"My darling," she said, looking fondly at Florence, "I trust you did not wait for me, and that I have not caused you any inconvenience. But if I have," she added, in an almost cooing voice, "you will forgive me when you know all."

"Oh yes, dear Aunt Anne, I will forgive you," and Florence signed to Jane to bring a plate. "You must be shockingly hungry," she laughed. "Where have you been, may I know?"

"I will tell you presently, my darling, you shall know all. But I can't eat anything," Aunt Anne answered quickly. Even the thought of food seemed to make her impatient. "Jane," she said, with the little air of pride that Jane resented, "you need not bring a plate for me. I do not require anything." Then, speaking to Florence again, she went on with half-beaming, half-condescending gentleness: "Finish your repast, my darling; pray don't let my intrusion—for it is an intru-

sion when I am not able to join in your meal—hurry you. When you have finished, but not till then, I have a communication to make to you. It is one I feel to be due to you before any one else; and it will prove to you how much I depend on your sympathy and love." She spoke with earnestness, unfastening her cloak and nervously fastening it the while. Florence looked at her with surprise, with pity. Poor old lady, she thought, how easily she worked herself into a state of excitement.

"Tell me what it is now, dear Aunt Anne," she said gently. "Has anything occurred to worry you? Have you been to Guildford?"

"To Guildford? No, my dear. Something has occurred, but not to worry me. It is something that will make me very happy, and I trust that it will make you very happy to hear it. I rely on your sympathy and Walter's to support me." Florence was not very curious. Aunt Anne had always so much earnestness at her command, and was always prodigal of it. Besides, it did not seem likely that anything important had happened; some trifling pleasure or vexation, probably, nothing more.

At last the little meal was finished, the things pushed through the buttery-hatch, the crumbs swept off the cloth by Jane, who seemed to linger in a manner that Mrs. Baines in her own mind felt to be wholly reprehensible, and wanting in respect towards her superiors. But the cloth was folded and put away at last, the buttery-hatch closed, the fire adjusted, and the door shut. Aunt Anne gave a sigh of relief, then throwing her cloak back over the chair, she rose and stood irresolute on the hearth-rug. Florence went towards her.

"Have you been anywhere by train?" she asked.

"No, my love. I went to the station to meet some one." She trembled with excitement while she spoke. Florence noticed it with wonder.

"What is it, Aunt Anne?" she asked gently. The old lady stretched out her two thin hands, and suddenly dropped her head for a moment on Florence's shoulder; but she raised it quickly, and evidently struggled to be calm.

"My darling," she said, "I know you will sympathize with me, I know your loving heart. I knew it the first day I saw you, when you were at Rottingdean, and stood under the pear-tree with your dear Walter——"

"Yes, oh yes, dear——" Florence had so often heard of that pear-tree. But what could it have to do with the present situation?

"I shall never forget the picture you two made," the old lady went on, not heeding the interruption; "I knew all that was in your dear heart then, just as I feel that you will understand all that is in mine now." Her face was flushed, her eyes were almost bright, and there were tears in them, the left one winked tremulously.

Florence looked at her in amazement. "What is it, Aunt Anne? Do tell me; tell me at once, dear," she said entreatingly. "And tell me where you have been, so late, and in the dark." For a moment Aunt Anne hesitated, then, with a gasp and a strong effort to be firm and dignified, she raised her head and spoke.

"My dear—my dear, all this time I have been with Alfred Wimple. He loves me."

"He loves you," Florence repeated, her eyes full of wonder; "he loves you. Yes, of course he loves you, we all do," she said soothingly, too much surprised to speculate farther.

"Yes, he loves me," Aunt Anne said again, in an almost solemn voice, "and I have promised to be his wife."

"Aunt Anne!—to marry him!"

"Yes, dear, to marry him," and she waited as if for congratulations.

"But, Aunt Anne, dear——" Florence began in astonishment, and then she stopped; for though she had had some idea of the old lady's infatuation, she had never dreamt of its ending in matrimony. Mrs. Baines was excited and strange; it might be some delusion, some joke that had been played on her, for Mr. Wimple could not have seriously asked her to marry him. Florence waited, not knowing what to say. But Aunt Anne's excitement seemed to be passing, and with a tender, pitiful expression on her face, she waited for her niece to speak. "But, Aunt Anne, dear," was all Florence could say again in her bewilderment.

"But what, Florence?" Mrs. Baines spoke with a half-tragic, half-resentful manner. "Have you nothing more to say to me, my love?"

"But you are not really going to marry him, are you?" Florence asked in an incredulous voice.

The old lady answered in a terribly earnest one.

"Yes, Florence, I am; and never shall man have truer, more loving help-meet than I will be to him," she burst out hero-

ically, holding herself erect and looking her niece in the face. There was something infinitely pathetic about her as she stood there, quivering with feeling and aching for sympathy, yet old, wrinkled, and absurd, her poor, scanty hair pushed back and her weak eyes full of tears. For a moment there was silence.

"But, dear Aunt Anne, he—he is so much younger than you," Florence said at last, bringing out her words slowly, and hating herself for saying them.

"Age is not counted by years, my darling," Aunt Anne answered, "and if he does not feel my age a drawback, why should I count his youth one? He loves me, Florence, I know he loves me," she broke out in a passionate, tearful voice, "and you would not have me throw away or depreciate a faithful heart that has been given me?"

Then the practical side of Florence's nature spoke up in despair. "But, Aunt Anne, he—is very poor."

"I know he is poor, but he is young and strong and hopeful; and he will work. He says he will work like a slave for me; and if he is content to face poverty with me, how can I be afraid to face it with him?"

"But you want comforts, Aunt Anne?"

"Oh no, my love, my tastes are very simple, and I shall be content to do without them for his sake."

"But at your time of life, dear Aunt Anne, you do want them—you are not young—as he is." Then Aunt Anne burst into tears, tears that were evidently a blessed relief, and had been pent up in her poor old heart, waiting for an excuse to come forth.

"Florence, I did not think you would tell me of my age. If I do not feel it, and he does not, why should you remind me of it? And why should you tell me that he is poor? Do you suppose that I am so selfish or—or that I would sell myself for comfort and luxury? If he can face poverty with me, I can face it with him. I did think, Florence, that you would have been kind to me, and understood and sympathized. I told him that on your heart and Walter's I could rely. You know how lonely I have been, how desolate and how miserable. But for your bounty and goodness I should have died——"

"Oh no, dear Aunt Anne——"

"And now, in this great crisis—now, when a young, brave, beautiful life is laid at my feet, now that I am loved as truly as ever woman was loved in this world, as tenderly as Walter loves you, Florence, you fail me, as—as if"—she put her

hand to her throat to steady her quivering voice—"as if you would not let me taste the cup of happiness of which you drink every day."

"But, Aunt Anne, it isn't that, indeed," Florence answered, thinking despairingly of Walter, and wishing that she could begin writing to him that very minute, asking him what on earth she ought to say or do.

"It is that—that—it is so unexpected, so strange. I knew, of course, that you liked him, that you were good friends; but I never dreamt that he was in love with you." Aunt Anne's tears seemed to vanish as if by magic, her left eye winked almost fiercely, her lips opened, but no sound came. With a great effort she recovered her voice at last, and with some of her old dignity, dashed with severe surprise, she asked:—

"My darling, is there any reason why he should not love me?"

She stood gravely waiting for a reply, while Florence felt that she was managing badly, that she was somehow hurting and insulting Aunt Anne. After all, the old lady had a right to do as she liked; it was evident that she was incapable of taking in the absurdity of the situation.

"But, Aunt Anne——" she began, and stopped.

"My dear Florence," Mrs. Baines repeated still more severely, "will you tell me if there is any very obvious reason why he should not love me? I am not an ogress, my darling—I am not an ogress," she cried, suddenly breaking down and bursting into floods of tears, while her head dropped on to her black merino dress.

She looked so old and worn, so wretched and lonely as she stood there weeping bitterly, that Florence could stand it no longer, and going forward she put her arms round the poor old soul, and kissed her fondly.

"No, dear Aunt Anne," she said, "you are not an ogress; you are a sweet old dear, and I love you. Don't cry—don't cry, you dear."

"My love, you are cruel to me," Aunt Anne sobbed.

"Oh no, I am not, and you shall marry any one you like. It was a little surprising, you know, and of course I didn't—I didn't think that marrying was in your thoughts," she added feebly, for she didn't know what to say.

"Bless you, my darling, bless you," the old lady gasped gratefully; "I knew you would be staunch to me when you had recovered from the surprise of my com-

munication, but"—and she gently disengaged herself from Florence's embrace and spoke in the nervous, quivering voice that always came to her in moments of excitement—"but, Florence, since the first moment we met, Alfred Wimple and I have felt that we were ordained for each other."

"Yes, dear," Florence said soothingly.

"He says he shall never forget the moments we sat together on your balcony that night when your dear Walter fetched the white shawl of yours, Florence, to put round my shoulders," the old lady went on earnestly. "And the sympathy between us is so great that we do not feel the difference of years; besides, he says he has never liked very young women, he has always felt that the power to love accumulated with time, as my power to love has done. Few of the women who have been loved by great men have been very young, my darling."

"I didn't know," Florence began, for Aunt Anne had paused, almost as if she were repeating something she had learnt by heart.

"He asked me to-night," she went on, with another little gasp, "if I remembered—if I remembered—I forget— But all the great passions of history have been concentrated on women in their prime. Petrarch's Laura had eight children when the poet fell in love with her, and Helen of Troy was sixty when—when—I forget," she said again, shaking her head; "but he remembers; he went through them all to-night. Besides, I may be old in years, but I am not old in heart; you cannot say that I am, Florence."

She was getting excited again. Almost without her knowledge Florence led her to the easy-chair, and gently pushing her down on to it, undid the strings and tried to take off her bonnet; but the old lady resisted.

"No, my dear, don't take off my bonnet," she said, "unless you will permit me to ring," she added, getting back to her old-fashioned formality, "and request Jane to bring me my cap from up-stairs."

But Florence felt that Jane might look curiously at the wrinkled face that still showed signs of recent agitation, so she put her hand softly on the one that Aunt Anne had stretched out to touch the bell.

"I will get it for you, dear," she said, and in a moment she had tripped up-stairs and brought down the soft lace cap put ready on the bed, and the cashmere slippers edged with fur and lined with red flannel, in which Aunt Anne liked to en-

case her feet in the evening. "There, now, you will feel better, you poor dear," she said, when they were put on and the old lady sat silent and composed, looking as if she were contemplating her future, and the new life before her. Florence stood by her silently for a moment, thinking the past weeks over in which Aunt Anne, with her poverty and dignity, her generosity and recklessness, had formed so striking a figure. Then she thought of the lonely life the poor old lady had led in the little lodging.

After all, if she only had even a very little happiness with that horrid Mr. Wimple, it would be something; and of course, if he didn't behave properly, Walter could take her away. The worst of it was she had understood that Mr. Wimple had no money. She had heard that he lived on a small allowance from an uncle, and the uncle might stop that allowance when he heard that his nephew had married an old woman who had not a penny.

"Aunt Anne," she asked gently, "does he know that you are not rich?"

"Florence, I told him plainly that I had no fortune," the old lady answered, with a pathetic, half-hunted look on her face that made Florence hate herself for her lack of sympathy. But she felt that she ought to ask some questions. Walter would be so angry if she allowed her to go into misery and fresh poverty without making a single effort to save her.

"And has he money, dear—enough to keep you both, at any rate?"

The tears trickled down Aunt Anne's face again while she answered:—

"If I did not ask him that question, Florence, it is not for you to ask it me. I neither know nor care what he has. If he is willing to take me for myself only, so am I willing to take him, loving him for himself only too. I am too old to marry for money, and he is too noble to do so. We are grown-up man and woman, Florence, and know our own hearts; we will brook no interference—we will brook no interference, my darling, not even from you."

She got up tremblingly.

"I must retire," she said; "you must allow me to retire, and in the privacy of my own room I shall be able to reflect."

The long words were coming back; they were a sign that Aunt Anne was herself again.

"Yes, dear Aunt Anne; I am sure you must want to be alone, and to think," Florence said gently.

The old lady was not appeased.



"You know, you remember what you felt yourself when your Walter first loved you, Florence," she said distantly. "Yes, I must be alone; my heart is full—I must be alone."

Florence led her up-stairs to her room. Mrs. Baines stood formally in the doorway.

"Good-night, my love," she said, with cold disappointment in her voice which she seemed unable to control.

"Can't I help you, Aunt Anne?" Florence asked, almost entreatingly.

"No, my love, I must be alone," Mrs. Baines repeated firmly, and retreating into her room she shut the door.

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From The Contemporary Review.  
LACEDÆMON.

BY WALTER PATER.

AMONG the Greeks [says Socrates in the "Protagoras"] philosophy has flourished longest, and is still most abundant, at Crete and Lacedæmon; and there there are more teachers of philosophy than anywhere else in the world. But the Lacedæmonians deny this, and pretend to be unlearned people, lest it should become manifest that it is through philosophy they are supreme in Greece; that they may be thought to owe their supremacy to fighting and manly spirit, for they think that if the means of their superiority were made known all the Greeks would practise this. But now, by keeping it a secret, they have succeeded in misleading the Laconisers in the various cities of Greece, and in imitation of them these people buffet themselves, and practise gymnastics, and put on boxing-gloves, and wear short cloaks, as if it were by such things that the Lacedæmonians beat the Greeks. But the Lacedæmonians, when they wish to have intercourse with their philosophers without reserve, and are weary of going to them by stealth, make legal proclamation that those Laconisers should depart, with any other aliens who may be sojourning among them, and thereupon betake themselves to their sophists unobserved by strangers. And you may know that what I say is true, and that the Lacedæmonians are better instructed than all other people in philosophy and the art of discussion in this way. If any one will converse with even the most insignificant of the Lacedæmonians, he may find him indeed in the greater part of what he says seemingly but a poor creature; but then at some chance point in the conversation he will throw in some brief compact saying worthy of remark, like a clever archer, so that his interlocutor shall seem no better than a child. Of this fact some both of those now living and of the ancients have been aware, and that to Laconise consists in the study of philosophy far rather

than in the pursuit of gymnastic, for they saw that to utter such sayings as those was only possible for a perfectly educated man.

OF course there is something in that of the romance to which the genius of Plato readily inclined him; something also of the Platonic humor or irony, which suggests for example to Meno, so anxious to be instructed in the theory of virtue, that the philosophic temper must be deported from Attica, its natural home, to Thessaly—to the rude northern capital whence that ingenuous youth was freshly arrived. Partly romantic, partly humorous, in his Laconism, Plato is, however, quite serious in locating a certain spirit at Lacedæmon of which his own ideal republic would have been the completer development; while the picture he draws of it presents many a detail taken straight from Lacedæmon as it really was, as if by an admiring visitor who had in person paced the streets of the Dorian metropolis it was so difficult for any alien to enter. What was actually known of that stern place, of the Lacedæmonians at home, at school, had charmed into fancies about it other philosophic theorists, Xenophon for instance, who had little or nothing of romantic tendency about them.

And there was another sort of romancing also, quite opposite to this of Plato, concerning the hard ways among themselves of those Lacedæmonians who were so invincible in the field. "The Lacedæmonians," says Pausanias, "appear to have admired least of all people poetry and the praise which it bestows." "At Lacedæmon there is more philosophy than anywhere else in the world," is what Plato, or the Platonic Socrates, had said. Yet, on the contrary, there were some who alleged that true Lacedæmonians—Lacedæmonian nobles—for their protection against the "effeminacies" of culture were denied all knowledge of reading and writing. But then we know that written books are properly a mere assistant, sometimes, as Plato himself suggests, a treacherous assistant, to memory; those conservative Lacedæmonians being, so to speak, the people of memory pre-eminently, and very appropriately, for, whether or not they were taught to read and write, they were acknowledged adepts in the Pythagorean philosophy, a philosophy which attributes to memory so preponderating a function in the mental life. "Writing," says K. O. Müller, in his laborious, yet, in spite of its air of coldness, passably romantic work on "The Dorians"—an author whose quiet enthusiasm for his subject resulted in a



patient scholarship which well befits it: "Writing," he says, "was not essential in a nation where laws, hymns, and the praises of illustrious men—that is, jurisprudence and history—were taught in their schools of music." Music which, as we know, is or ought to be, according to those Pythagorean doctrines, itself the essence of all things, was everywhere in the perfect city of Plato; and among the Lacedæmonians also, who may be thought to have come within measurable distance of that perfect city, though with no conscious theories about it, music (*μουσική*), in the larger sense of the word, was everywhere, not to alleviate only but actually to promote and inform, to be the very substance of their so strenuous and taxing habit of life. What was this "music," this service or culture of the Muses, this harmony, partly moral, doubtless, but also throughout a matter of elaborate movement of the voice, of musical instruments, of all beside that could in any way be associated to such things—this music, for the maintenance, the perpetual sense of which those vigorous souls were ready to sacrifice so many opportunities, privileges, enjoyments of a different sort, so much of their ease, of themselves, of one another?

Platonism is a highly conscious reassertion of one of the two constituent elements in the Hellenic genius, of the spirit of the highlands namely, in which the early Dorian forefathers of the Lacedæmonian people had secreted their peculiar disposition, in contrast with the mobile, the marine and fluid temper of the littoral Ionian people. "The Republic" of Plato is an embodiment of that Platonic reassertion or preference, of Platonism, as the principle of a society, ideal enough indeed, yet in various degrees practicable. It is not understood by Plato to be an erection *de novo*, and therefore only on paper. Its foundations might be laid in certain measurable changes to be enforced in the old schools, in a certain reformed music which must be taught there, and would float thence into the existing homes of Greece, under the shadow of its old temples, the sanction of its old religion, its old memories, the old names of things. Given the central idea, with its essentially renovating power, the well-worn elements of society as it is would rebuild themselves, and a new color come gradually over all things as the proper expression of a certain new mind in them.

And in fact such embodiments of the specially Hellenic element in Hellenism, compacted in the natural course of polit-

ical development, there had been in a less ideal form in those many Dorian constitutions to which Aristotle refers. To Lacedæmon in "The Republic" itself, admiring allusions abound, covert, yet bold enough, if we remember the existing rivalry between Athens and her neighbor; and it becomes therefore a help in the study of Plato's political ideal to approach as near as we may to that earlier actual embodiment of its principles, which is also very interesting in itself. The Platonic city of the perfect would not have been cut clear away from the old roots of national life; would have had many links with the beautiful and venerable Greek cities of past and present. The ideal, poetic or romantic as it might seem, would but have begun where they had left off, where Lacedæmon, in particular, had left off. Let us, then, by way of realizing the better the physiognomy of Plato's theoretic building, suppose some contemporary student of "The Republic," a pupil, say, in the Athenian Academy, determined to gaze on the actual face of what has so strong a family likeness to it. Stimulated by his master's unconcealed Laconism, his approval of contemporary Lacedæmon, he is at the pains to journey thither, and make personal inspection of a place, in Plato's general commendations of which he may suspect some humor or irony, but which has unmistakably lent many a detail to his ideal Republic, on paper, or in thought.

He would have found it, this youthful Anacharsis, hard to get there, partly through the nature of the country, in part because the people of Lacedæmon (it was a point of system with them, as we saw) were suspicious of foreigners. Romantic dealers in political theory at Athens were safe in saying pretty much what they pleased about its domestic doings. Still, not so far away, made, not in idea and by the movements of an abstract argument, the mere strokes of a philosophic pen, but solidified by constancy of character, fortified anew on emergency by heroic deeds, for itself, for the whole of Greece, though with such persistent hold throughout on an idea, or system of ideas, that it might seem actually to have come ready-made from the mind of some half-divine Lycurgus, or through him from Apollo himself, creator of that music of which it was an example: there, in the hidden valley of the Eurotas, it was to be found, as a visible centre of actual human life, the place which was alleged to have come, harsh paradox as it might sound to Athenian

ears, within measurable distance of civic perfection, of the political and social ideal.

Our youthful Academic adventurer then, making his way along those difficult roads, between the ridges of the Eastern Arcadian Mountains, and emerging at last into hollow Laconia, would have found himself in a country carefully made the most of by the labor of serfs; a land of slavery, far more relentlessly organized according to law than anywhere else in Greece, where, in truth, for the most part slavery was a kind of accident. But whatever rigors these slaves of Laconia were otherwise subjected to, they enjoyed certainly that kind of well-being which does come of organization, from the order and regularity of system, living under central military authority, and bound themselves to military service; to furnish (as under later feudal institutions) so many efficient men-at-arms on demand, and maintain themselves in readiness for war as they labored in those distantly scattered farms, seldom visited by their true masters from Lacedæmon, whither year by year they sent in kind their heavy tribute of oil, barley, and wine. The very genius of conservatism here enthroned, secured, we may be sure, to this old-fashioned country life something of the personal dignity, of the enjoyments also natural to it; somewhat livelier religious feasts, for example, than their lords allowed themselves. Stray echoes of their boisterous plebeian mirth on such occasions have reached us in Greek literature.

But if the traveller had penetrated a little more closely he would have been told certain startling stories, with at least a basis of truth in them, even as regards the age of Plato. These slaves were *Greeks*; no rude Scythians, nor crouching, decrepit Asiatics, like ordinary prisoners of war, the sort of slaves you could buy, but genuine Greeks, speaking their native tongue, if with less of muscular tension and energy, yet probably with pleasanter voice and accent than their essentially highland masters. Physically they thrived, under something of the same discipline which had made those masters the masters also of all Greece. They saw them now and then — their younger lords, brought, under strict tutelage, on those long hunting expeditions; one of their so rare enjoyments, prescribed for them, as was believed, by the founder of their polity. But sometimes (here was the report which made one shudder even in broad daylight, in those seemingly reposeful places) sometimes those young nobles of

Lacedæmon reached them on a different kind of pursuit: came by night, secretly, though by no means contrarily to the laws of a state, crafty as it was determined, to murder them at home, or a certain moiety of them; one here or there perhaps who, with good Achæan blood in his veins, and under a wholesome mode of life, was grown too tall, or too handsome, or too fruitful a father, to feel quite like a slave. Under a sort of slavery that makes him strong and beautiful, where personal beauty was so greatly prized, his masters are in fact jealous of him.

But masters thus hard to others, these Lacedæmonians, as we know, were the reverse of indulgent to themselves. While, as matter of theory, power and privilege belonged exclusively to the old, to the seniors, *οἱ ἡρόντες, ἡ γερουσία* — ruling by a council wherein no question might be discussed, one might only deliver one's aye! or no! Lacedæmon was in truth before all things an organized place of discipline, an organized opportunity also, for youth, for the sort of youth that knew how to command by serving — a constant exhibition of youthful courage, youthful self-respect, yet above all of true youthful docility; youth thus committing itself absolutely, soul and body, to a corporate sentiment in its very sports. There was a third sort of regulation visits the lads of Lacedæmon were driven to pay to those country places, the vales, the uplands, when, to brace youthful stomachs and develop resource they came at stated intervals as a kind of mendicants or thieves, feet and head uncovered through frost and heat, to steal their sustenance, under penalties if detected; "a survival," anthropologists would doubtless prove, pointing out collateral illustrations of the same, from a world of purely animal courage and keenness. Whips and rods used in a kind of monitorial system by themselves had a great part in the education of these young aristocrats; and, as pain surely must do, pain not of bodily disease or wretched accidents, but as it were by dignified rules of art, seem to have refined them, to have made them observant of the minutest direction in those musical exercises, wherein eye and ear and foot all alike combined. There could be nothing *παραλείποντον*, as Plato says, no "oversights," here. No! every one, at every moment, quite at his best; and, observe especially! with no superfluities; seeing that when we have to do with music of any kind, with matters of art, in stone, in words, in the actions of life, all superfluities are in very

truth "superfluities of naughtiness" such as annihilate music.

The country through which our young traveller from his laxer school of Athens seeks his way to Lacedæmon, this land of a noble slavery, so peacefully occupied but for those irregular nocturnal terrors, was perhaps the loveliest in Greece, with that peculiarly blent loveliness, in which, as at Florence, the expression of a luxurious lowland is duly checked by the severity of its mountain barriers. It was a type of the Dorian purpose in life—sternness, like sea-water infused into wine, overtaking a matter naturally rich, at the moment when fulness may lose its savor and expression. Amid the corn and oleanders—corn "so tall, close, and luxuriant," as the modern traveller there still finds—it was visible at last, Lacedæmon, *κοῖλον Σπάρτην*, "hollow Sparta," under the sheltering walls of Taygetus, the broken and rugged forms of which were attributed to earthquake, but without proper walls of its own. In that natural fastness, or trap, or falcon's nest, it had no need of them, the falcon of the land, with the hamlets, *πολύγυια*, a hundred and more, dispersed over it, in jealously enforced seclusion from one another.

From the first he notes "the antiquated appearance" of Lacedæmon, by no means a "growing" place, always rebuilding, remodelling, itself, after the newest fashion, with shapeless suburbs stretching further and further on every side of it grown too large perhaps, as Plato threatens, to be a body, a corporate unity, at all; not that, but still, and to the last, itself only a great village, a solemn, ancient, mountain village. Even here of course there had been movement, some sort of progress, if so it is to be called, linking limb to limb; but long ago. Originally a union after the manner of early Rome of perhaps three or four neighboring villages which had never lost their physiognomy, like Rome it occupied a group of irregular heights, the outermost roots of Taygetus, on the bank of a river or mountain torrent, impetuous enough in winter, a series of wide shallows and deep pools in the blazing summer. It was every day however, all the year round, that Lacedæmonian youth plunged itself in the Eurotas. Hence, from this circumstance of the union there of originally disparate parts, the picturesque and expressive irregularity, had they had time to think it such, of the "city" properly so termed, the one open place or street, High Street, or *Corso*—*Aphetais* by name, lined, irregularly again, with various reli-

gious and other monuments. It radiated on all sides into a mazy coil, an ambush, of narrow, crooked lanes, up and down, in which attack and defence would necessarily be a matter of hand-to-hand fighting. In the outskirts lay the citizens' houses, roomier far than those of Athens, with spacious, walled courts, almost in the country. Here, in contrast to the homes of Athens, the legitimate wife had a real dignity, the unmarried women a singular freedom. There were no door-knockers; you shouted at the outer gate to be let in. Between the high walls lanes passed into country roads, sacred ways to ancient sacro-sanct localities, Therapnæ, Amyclæ, on this side or that, under the shade of mighty plane-trees.

Plato, as the reader may remember, gives a hint that, like all other visible things, the very trees—how they grow—exercise an æsthetic influence on character. The diligent legislator, therefore, would have his preferences, even in this matter of trees under which the citizens of the perfect city might sit down to rest. What trees? you wonder. The olive? the laurel, as if wrought in grandiose metal? the cypress? that came to a wonderful height in Dorian Crete; the oak? we think it very expressive of strenuous national character. Well, certainly the plane-tree for one, characteristic tree of Lacedæmon then and now; a very tranquil and tranquillizing object spreading its level or gravely curved masses on the air, as regally as the tree of Lebanon itself. A vast grove of such was the distinguishing mark of Lacedæmon in any distant view of it; that, and, as at Athens, a colossal image, older than the days of Phœdrias; the "Demos" of Lacedæmon, it would seem, towering visibly above the people it protected. Below those mighty trees, on an island in their national river, were the "playing-fields," where Lacedæmonian youth after sacrifice in the "Ephebeum" delighted others rather than itself (no shirking was allowed) with a sort of football, under rigorous self-imposed rules—tearing, biting—a sport, rougher even than our own, *et même très dangereux*, as our Attic neighbors, the French, say of the English game.

They were orderly enough perforce, the boys, the young men, within the city—seen, but not heard, except under regulations, when they made the best music in the world. Our visitor from Athens when he saw those youthful soldiers, or military students, as Xenophon in his pretty treatise on the polity of Lacedæmon describes,

walking with downcast eyes, their hands meekly hidden in their cloaks, might have thought them young monks, had he known of such.

A little mountain town, however ambitious, however successful in its ambition, would hardly be expected to compete with Athens, or Corinth, itself a Dorian state, in art-production, yet had not only its characteristic preferences in this matter, in plastic and literary art, but had also many venerable and beautiful buildings to show. The Athenian visitor, who is standing now in the central space of Lacedæmon, notes here, as being a trait also of the "perfect city" of academic theory, that precisely because these people find themselves very susceptible to the influences of form, and color, and sound, to external æsthetic influence, but have withal a special purpose, a certain strongly conceived disciplinary or ethic ideal, a peculiar humor therefore prevails among them, a self-denying humor, in regard to these things. Those ancient Pelopid princes, from whom the hereditary kings of historic Lacedæmon, come back from exile into their old home, claim to be descended, had had their palaces with a certain Homeric, Asiatic splendor, of wrought metal and the like; considerable relics of which still remained, but as public or sacred property now. At the time when Plato's scholar stands before them, the houses of these latter historic kings — two kings, as the reader will remember, always reigning together, in some not quite clearly evolved differentiation of the temporal and spiritual functions — were plain enough; the royal doors, when beggar or courtier approached them, no daintier than Lycurgus had prescribed for all true Lacedæmonian citizens; rude, strange things to look at, fashioned only, like the ceilings within, with axe and saw, of old mountain oak or pine from those great Taygetan forests, whence came also the abundant iron, which this stern people of iron and steel had superinduced on that earlier dreamy age of silver and gold; of steel, however, admirably tempered and wrought in its application to military use, and much sought after throughout Greece.

Layer upon layer, the relics of those earlier generations, a whole succession of remarkable races, lay beneath the strenuous footsteps of the present occupants, as there was old poetic legend in the depths of their seemingly so practical or prosaic souls. Nor beneath their feet only; the relics of their worship, their sanctuaries, their tombs, their very houses, were part

of the scenery of actual life. Our young Platonic visitor from Athens, climbing through those narrow, winding lanes, and standing at length on the open platform of the Aphetai, finds himself surrounded by treasures, modest treasures, of ancient architecture, dotted irregularly here and there about him, as if with conscious design upon picturesque effect, such irregularities sometimes carrying in them the secret of expression, an accent. Old Alcman for one had been alive to the poetic opportunities of the place; boasts that he belongs to Lacedæmon, "abounding in sacred tripods;" that it was here the Heliconian Muses had revealed themselves to him. If the private abodes even of royalty were rude it was only that the splendor of places dedicated to religion and the state might the more abound. Most splendid of them all, the "Stoa Pækile," a cloister or portico with painted walls, to which the spoils of the Persian war had been devoted, ranged its pillars of white marble on one side of the central space; on the other, connecting those high memories with the task of the living, lay the "Choros," where, at the "Gymnopædia," the Spartan youth danced in honor of Apollo.

Scattered up and down among the monuments of victory in battle were the *heroa*, tombs or chapels of the heroes who had purchased it with their blood — Pausanias, Leonidas, brought home from Thermopylæ forty years after his death. "A pillar, too," says Pausanias, "is erected here, on which the paternal names are inscribed of those who at Thermopylæ sustained the attack of the Medes." Here in truth all deities put on a martial habit — Aphrodite, the Muses, Eros himself, Athene Chalciæcus, Athene of the Brazen House, an antique temple towering above the rest, built from the spoils of some victory long since forgotten. The name of the artist who made the image of the tutelary goddess was remembered in the annals of early Greek art, Gitiades, a native of Lacedæmon. He had composed a hymn also in her praise. Could we have seen the place he had restored rather than constructed, with its covering of mythological reliefs in brass or bronze, perhaps Homer's descriptions of a seemingly impossible sort of metallic architecture would have been less taxing to his reader's imagination. Those who in other places had lost their tastes amid the facile splendors of a later day, might here go to school again.

Throughout Greece, in fact, it was the Doric style came to prevail as the religious

or hieratic manner, never to be surpassed for that purpose, as the Gothic style seems likely to do with us. Though it is not exclusively the invention of Doric men, yet, says Müller, "the Dorian character created the Dorian architecture," and he notes in it, especially, the severity of the perfectly straight, smartly tapering line of its column; the bold projection of the capital; the alternation there of long, unornamented, plain surfaces with narrower bands of decorated work; the profound shadows; the expression of security, of harmony, infused throughout; the magnificent pediment crowning the whole, like the cornice of mountain wall, beyond, around, and above it. Standing there in the Aphetai, amid these venerable works of art, the visitor could not forget the natural architecture about him. As the Dorian genius had differentiated itself from the common Hellenic type in the heart of the mountains of Epirus, so here at last, in its final and most characteristic home, it was still surrounded by them: *ὄρη τὰ τε καὶ κοίλαινεται.*

We know, some of us, what such mountain neighborhood means. The wholesome vigor, the clearness and purity they maintain in matters such as air, light, water; how their presence multiplies the contrasts, the element of light and shadow, in things; the untouched perfection of the minuter ornament, flower or crystal, they permit one sparingly; their reproachful aloofness, though so close to us, keeping sensitive minds at least in a sort of moral alliance with their remoter solitudes. "The whole life of the Lacedæmonian community," says Müller, "had a secluded, impenetrable, and secret character." You couldn't really know it unless you were of it.

A system which conceived the whole of life as matter of attention, patience, a fidelity to detail, like that of good soldiers and musicians, could not but tell also on the merest handicrafts, constituting them in the fullest sense a *craft*. If the money of Sparta was, or had recently been, of cumbrous iron, that was because its trade had a sufficient variety of stock to be mainly by barter, and we may suppose the market (into which, like our own academic youth at Oxford, young Spartans were forbidden to go) full enough of business — many a busy workshop in those winding lanes. The lower arts certainly no true Spartan might practise; but even Helots, artisan Helots, would have more than was usual elsewhere of that sharpened intelligence and the disciplined hand in such

labor, which really dignify those who follow it. In Athens itself certain Lacedæmonian commodities were much in demand, things of military service or for every-day use, turned out with flawless adaptation to their purpose.

The Helots, then, to whom this business exclusively belonged, a race of slaves, distinguishable, however, from the slaves or serfs who tilled the land, handing on their mastery in those matters in a kind of guild, father to son, through old-established families of flute-players, wine-mixers, bakers, and the like, thus left their hereditary lords, the *Gens Fleur-de-lisés* (to borrow an expression from French feudalism) in unbroken leisure, to perfect themselves for the proper functions of gentlemen — leisure, *σχολή*, in the two senses of the word, which in truth involve one another — their whole time free, to be told out in austere schools. Long, easeful nights, with more than enough to eat and drink, the "illiberal" pleasures of appetite, as Aristotle and Plato agree in thinking them, are of course the appropriate reward or remedy of those who work painfully with their hands, and seem to have been freely conceded to those Helots, who by concession of the State, from first to last their legal owner, were in domestic service, and sometimes much petted in the house, though by no means fully conceded to the "golden youth" of Lacedæmon — youth of gold, or gilded steel. The traditional Helot, drunk perforce to disgust his young master with the coarseness of vice, is probably a fable; and there are other stories full of a touching spirit of natural service, of submissiveness, of an instinctively loyal admiration for the brilliant qualities of one trained perhaps to despise him, by which the servitor must have become, in his measure, actually a sharer in them. Just here, for once, we see that slavish *ἥθος*, the servile range of sentiment, which ought to accompany the condition of slavery, if it be indeed, as Aristotle supposes, one of the natural relationships between man and man, idealized, or æsthetically right, pleasant, and proper; the *ἀρετή*, or "best possible condition" of the young servitor as such, including a sort of bodily worship, and a willingness to share the keen discipline which had developed the so attractive gallantry of his youthful lords.

A great wave, successive waves, of invasion, sufficiently remote to have lost already all historic truth of detail, had left them — these Helots and the Peræci, in the country round about — thus to serve



among their own kinsmen, though so close to them in lineage, so much on a level with their masters in essential physical qualities that to the last they could never be entirely subdued in spirit. Patient modern research, following the track of a deep-rooted national tradition veiled in the mythological figments which centre in what is called "The Return of the Heraclidae," reveals those northern immigrants or invaders, at various points on their way, dominant all along it, from a certain deep vale in the heart of the mountains of Epirus southwards, gradually through zone after zone of more temperate lowland, to reach their perfection, highlanders from first to last, in this mountain "hollow" of Lacedæmon. They claim supremacy, not as Dorian invaders, but as kinsmen of the old Achæan princes of the land; yet it was to the fact of conquest, to the necessity of maintaining a position so strained, like that, as Aristotle expressly pointed out, of a beleaguered encampment in an enemy's territory, that the singular institutions of Lacedæmon, the half-military, half-monastic spirit which prevailed in this so gravely beautiful place, had been originally due. But observe!—Its moral and political system, in which that slavery was so significant a factor, its discipline, its æsthetic and other scruples, its peculiar moral *hûos*, having long before our Platonic student comes thither attained its original and proper ends, survived, there is the point, survived as an end in itself, as a matter of sentiment, of public and perhaps still more of personal pride, though of the finer, the very finest sort, in one word as an *ideal*. Pericles, as you remember, in his famous vindication of the Athenian system, makes his hearers understand that the ends of the Lacedæmonian people might have been attained with less self-sacrifice than theirs. But still, there it remained, *ἡ δόξα Δωρικῇ*—the genuine Laconism of the Lacedæmonians themselves, their traditional conception of life, with its earnestness, its precision, and strength, its loyalty to its own type, its impassioned completeness; a spectacle, æsthetically, at least, very interesting, like some perfect instrument shaping to what they visibly were, the most beautiful of all people, in Greece, in the world.

"Bodily exercise," gymnastic, of course, does not always and necessarily effect the like of that. A certain perfectly preserved old Roman mosaic pavement in the Lateran Museum, presents a terribly fresh picture of the results of another sort of "training," the monstrous development by

a cruel art, by exercise, of this or that muscle, changing a boy or man into a merely mechanic instrument with which his breeders might make money by amusing the Roman people. Victor Hugo's odious dream of *L'homme qui rit*, must have had something of a prototype among those old Roman gladiators. The Lacedæmonians, says Xenophon on the other hand, *ομοίως, ἀπὸ τε τῶν σκελῶν καὶ ἀπὸ χειρῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τραχήλων γυμνάζονται*. Here, too, that is to say, they aimed at, they found, proportion, Pythagorean symmetry or music, and bold as they could be in their exercises (it was a Lacedæmonian who, at Olympia, for the first time threw aside the heavy girdle and ran naked to the goal) forbade all that was likely to disfigure the body. Though we must not suppose all ties of nature rent asunder, nor all connection between parents and children in those genial, retired houses at an end in very early life, it was yet a strictly public education which began early with them, and with a very clearly defined programme, conservative of ancient traditional and unwritten rules, an aristocratic education for the few, the *liberales*—"liberals," as we may say, in that the proper sense of the word; it made them in very deed the lords, the masters of those they were meant by and by to rule; masters of their very souls, of their imagination, enforcing on them an ideal by a sort of spiritual authority, thus backing, or backed by, a very effective organization of "the power of the sword." In speaking of Lacedæmon, you see, it comes naturally to speak out of proportion, it might seem, of its youth and the education of its youth. But in fact if you enter into the spirit of Lacedæmonian youth, you may conceive Lacedæmonian manhood for yourselves; you see already what the boy, the youth, so late in obtaining his majority, in becoming a man, came to be in the action of life, and on the battlefield. "In a Doric state," says Müller, "education was, on the whole, a matter of more importance than government."

A young Lacedæmonian then of the privileged class left his home, his tender nurses in those large, quiet, old suburban houses early, for a public school, a schooling all the stricter as years went on, to be followed, even so, by a peculiar kind of barrack-life, the temper of which, a sort of military monasticism, (it must be repeated) would beset him to the end. Though in the gymnasium of Lacedæmonia no idle bystanders, no—well! Platonic loungers after truth or what not—were permitted, yet we are told, neither

there nor in Sparta generally, neither there nor anywhere else, were the boys permitted to be alone. If a certain love of reserve, of seclusion characterized the Spartan citizen as such, that, perhaps, was the cicatrice of that early wrench from a soft home into the imperative, inevitable gaze of his fellows, broad, searching, minute, his regret for, his desire to regain, moral and mental even more than physical ease. And his education continued late; he could seldom think of marriage till the age of thirty. Ethically it aimed at the reality, æsthetically at the expression, of reserved power, and set its subject early on the thought of his personal dignity, of self-command, in the artistic way, of a good musician, a good soldier. It is noted that "the general accent of the Doric dialect has itself the character not of question or entreaty, but of command or dictation." The place of deference, of obedience, was large in the education of Lacedæmonian youth; and they never complained. It involved however for the most part, as with ourselves, the government of youth by itself; an implicit subordination of the younger to the older, in many degrees. Quite early in life, at school, they found that superiors and inferiors, *ῥητοῖς* and *ὑπομεινόντες*, there really were; and their education proceeded with systematic boldness on that fact, *Ἐρεν, μελλέειν σιδεύνης* and the like—words, titles, which indicate an unflinching elaboration of the attitudes of youthful subordination and command, with responsibility—remain as a part of what we might call their "public-school slang." They ate together "in their divisions"—*ἀγέλια*—on much the same fare every day at a sort of messes; not reclined, like Ionians or Asiatics, but like heroes, the princely males in Homer, sitting upright on their wooden benches; were "inspected" frequently, and, by free use of *viva voce* examination "became adepts in presence of mind," in mental readiness and vigor, in the brief mode of speech Plato commends, which took and has kept its name from them; no warm baths allowed; a daily plunge in their river required. Yes! the beauty of these most beautiful of all people was a male beauty, far remote from feminine tenderness, had the expression of a certain *ascēsis* in it, was like unsweetened wine. In comparison with it beauty of another type might seem to be wanting in edge or accent.

And they could be silent. Of the positive uses of the negation of speech, like genuine scholars of Pythagoras, the Lacedæmonians were well aware, gaining

strength and intensity by repression. Long spaces of enforced silence had doubtless something to do with that expressive brevity of utterance which could be also, when they cared, so inexpressive of what their intentions really were; something to do with the habit of mind to which such speaking would come naturally. In contrast with the ceaseless prattle of Athens, Lacedæmonian assemblies lasted as short a time as possible, all standing. A Lacedæmon ambassador being asked in whose name he was come, replies: "In the name of the State, if I succeed; if I fail, in my own." What they lost in extension they gained in depth.

Had our traveller been tempted to ask a young Lacedæmonian to return his visit at Athens, permission would have been refused him. He belonged to a community bent above all things on keeping indelibly its own proper color. Its more strictly mental education centred, in fact, in a faithful training of the memory, again in the spirit of Pythagoras, in regard to what seemed best worth remembering. Hard and practical as Lacedæmonians might seem, they lived nevertheless very much by imagination; and to train the memory, to preoccupy their minds with the past, as in our own classic or historic culture of youth, was in reality to develop a vigorous imagination. In music, *μουσική*, as they conceived it, there would be no strictly selfish reading, writing, or listening; and if there was little a Lacedæmonian lad had to read or write at all, he had much to learn, like a true conservative, by heart: those unwritten laws of which the Council of Elders was the authorized depository, and on which the whole public procedure of the State depended; the archaic forms of religious worship; the names of their kings, of victors in their games or in battle; the brief record of great events; the oracles they had received; the *rhētrai*, from Lycurgus downwards, composed in metrical Lacedæmonian Greek; their history and law, in fact, actually set to music, by Terpander and others, it was said. What the Lacedæmonian learned by heart he was for the most part to sing; and we catch a glimpse, an echo, of their boys in school chanting; one of the things in old Greece one would have liked best to see and hear—youthful beauty and strength in perfect service; a manifestation of the true and genuine Heilenism, though it may make one think of the novices at school in some Gothic cloister, of our own old English schools,

nay, of the young Lacedæmonian's cousins at Sion, singing there the law and its praises.

The Platonic student of the ways of the Lacedæmonians observes then, is interested in observing, that their education which indeed makes no sharp distinction between mental and bodily exercise, results as it had begun in "music"—ends with body, mind, memory above all, their finest, on great show-days, in the dance. Austere, self-denying Lacedæmon had in fact one of the largest theatres in Greece, in part scooped out boldly on the hillside, built partly of enormous blocks of stone, the foundations of which may still be seen. We read what Plato says in "The Republic" of "imitations," of the imitative arts, imitation reaching, of course, its largest development on the stage, and are perhaps surprised at the importance he assigns, in every department of human culture, to a matter of that kind. But here as elsewhere to see was to understand. We should have understood Plato's drift in his long criticism and defence of imitative art, his careful system of rules concerning it, could we have seen the famous dramatic Lacedæmonian dancing. They danced a theme, a subject. A complex and elaborate art this must necessarily have been, but, as we may gather, as concise, direct, economically expressive, in all its varied sound and motion, as those swift, brief, lightly girt, *impromptu* Lacedæmonian sayings. With no movement of voice or hand or foot, *παρὰλεπόμενον*, unconsidered, as Plato forbids, it was the perfect flower of their correction, of that minute patience and care which ends in a perfect expressiveness; not a note, a glance, a touch but told obediently in the promotion of a firmly grasped mental conception; as in that perfect poetry or sculpture or painting, in which "the finger of the master is on every part of his work." We have nothing really like it, and to comprehend it must remember that, though it took place in part at least on the stage of a theatre—was in fact a ballet-dance, it had also the character both of a liturgical service and of a military inspection; and yet, in spite of its severity of rule, was a natural expression of the delight of all who took part in it.

So perfect a spectacle the gods themselves might be thought pleased to witness; were in consequence presented with it as an important element in the religious worship of the Lacedæmonians, in whose life religion had even a larger part than with the other Greeks, conspicuously religious, *δεισιδαίμονες*, involved in religion or

superstition, as the Greeks generally were. More closely even than their so scrupulous neighbors they associated the State, its acts and officers, with a religious sanction, religious usages, theories, traditions. While the responsibilities of secular government lay upon the Ephors, those mysteriously dual, at first sight useless, and yet so sanctimoniously observed kings, "of the house of Heracles," with something of the splendor of the Old Achæan or Homeric kings, in life as also in death, the splendid funerals, the passionate archaic laments which then followed them, were in fact of spiritual or priestly rank, the living and active centre of a poetic religious system, binding them "in a beneficent connection" to the past, and in the present with special closeness to the oracle of Delphi.

Of that catholic or general centre of Greek religion the Lacedæmonians were the hereditary and privileged guardians, as also the peculiar people of Apollo, the god of Delphi; but observe also, of Apollo in a peculiar development of his deity. In the dramatic business of Lacedæmon, centring in those almost liturgical dances, there was little comic acting. The fondness of the slaves for buffoonery and loud laughter, was to their master, who had no taste for the like, a reassuring note of his superiority. He therefore indulged them in it on occasion, and you might fancy that the religion of a people so strenuous, ever so full of their dignity, must have been a religion of gloom. It was otherwise. The Lacedæmonians, like those monastic persons of whom they so often remind one, as a matter of fact however surprising, were a very cheerful people; and the religion of which they had so much, deeply imbued everywhere with an optimism as of hopeful youth, encouraged that disposition, was above all a religion of sanity. The observant Platonic visitor might have taken note that something of that purgation of religious thought and sentiment, of its expression in literature, recommended in Plato's "Republic" had been already quietly effected here towards the establishment of a kind of cheerful daylight in men's tempers.

In furtherance then of such a religion of sanity, of that harmony of functions, which is the Aristotelian definition of health, Apollo, sanest of the natural gods, became also the tribal or home god of Lacedæmon. That common Greek worship of Apollo they made especially their own; but (just here is the noticeable point) with a marked preference for the human

element in him, for the mental powers of his being over those elementary or natural forces of production, which he also mystically represents, and which resulted sometimes in an orgiastic, an unintellectual, or even an immoral service. He remains youthful and unmarried. In congruity with this, it is observed that, in a quasi-Roman worship, abstract qualities and relationships, ideals, become subsidiary objects of religious consideration around him, such as sleep, death, fear, fortune, laughter even. Nay, other gods also are, so to speak, Apollinized, adapted to the Apolline presence; Aphrodite armed, Enyalios in fetters, perhaps that he may never depart thence. Amateurs everywhere of the virile element in life, the Lacedæmonians, in fact, impart to all things an intellectual character. Adding a strenuous logic to seemingly animal instincts, for them courage itself becomes, as for the strictly philosophic mind at Athens, with Plato and Aristotle, an intellectual condition, a form of right knowledge.

Such assertion of the consciously human interest in a religion based originally on a preoccupation with the unconscious forces of nature, was exemplified in the great religious festival of Lacedæmon. As a spectator of the "Hyacinthia," our Platonic student would have found himself one of a large body of strangers gathered together from Lacedæmon and its dependent towns and villages within the ancient precincts of Amyclæ, at the season between spring and summer when under the first fierce heat of the year the abundant hyacinths fade from the fields. Blue flowers, you remember, are the rarest, to many eyes the loveliest; and the Lacedæmonians with their guests were met together to celebrate the death of the hapless lad who had lent his name to them, Hyacinthus, son of Apollo, or son of an ancient mortal king who had reigned in this very place; in either case, greatly beloved of the god, who had slain him by sad accident as they played at quoits together delightfully, to his immense sorrow. That Boreas (the north-wind) had maliciously miscarried the discus, is a circumstance we hardly need to remind us that we have here, of course, only one of many transparent, unmistakable parables or symbols of the great solar change, so sudden in the south, like the story of Proserpine, Adonis, and the like. But here, more completely perhaps than in any other of those stories, the primary elemental sense had obscured itself behind its really

tragic analogue in human life, behind the figure of the dying youth. We know little of the details of the feast; incidentally, that Apollo was vested on the occasion in a purple robe, brought in ceremony from Lacedæmon, woven there, Pausanias tells us, in a certain house called from that circumstance "Chiton." You may remember how sparing these Lacedæmonians were of such dyed raiment, of any but the natural and virgin coloring of the fleece; that purple or red, however, was the color of their royal funerals, as indeed Amyclæ itself was famous for purple stuffs—*Amyclai vestes*. As the general order of the feast we discern clearly a single day of somewhat shrill gaiety between two days of significant mourning, not unlike the feast of All Souls' Day, directed from mimic grief for a mythic object, to a really sorrowful commemoration by the whole Lacedæmonian people—each separate family for its own deceased members.

It was so again with those other youthful demi-gods, the Dioscuri, themselves also, in old heroic time, resident in this venerable place; *Amyclai fratres*, fraternal leaders of the Lacedæmonian people. Their statues at this date were numerous in Laconia; and the *docana*, primitive symbols of them, those two upright beams of wood carried to battle before the two kings, until it happened that through their secret enmity a certain battle was lost, after which one king only proceeded to the field, and one part only of that token of fraternity, the other remaining at Sparta. Well! they were two stars, you know, at their original birth in men's minds, *Gemini*, virginal fresh stars of dawn, rising and setting alternately—those two, half-earthly, half-celestial, brothers, one of whom, Polynices, was immortal. The other, Castor, the younger, subject to old age and death, had fallen in battle, was found breathing his last; whereupon Polynices, at his own prayer, was permitted to die; with undying fraternal affection, had foregone one moiety of his privilege, and lay in the grave for a day in his brother's stead, but shone out again on the morrow; the brothers thus ever coming and going, interchangeably, but both alike gifted now with immortal youth.

In their origin, then, very obviously elemental deities, they were thus become almost wholly humanized, fraternized, with the Lacedæmonian people, their closest friends of the whole celestial company visitors as fond legend told at their very hearths, found warming themselves in the

half-light at their rude fireside. Themselves thus visible on occasion, at all times in devout art, they were the starry patrons of all that youth was proud of, delighted in, horsemanship, games, battle; and always with that profound fraternal sentiment. Brothers, comrades, who could not live without one another, they were the most fitting patrons of a place in which friendship, comradeship like theirs, came to so much. Lovers of youth they remained, those enstarred types of it, arrested thus at that moment of miraculous good fortune as a consecration of that clean, youthful friendship, "passing even the love of woman," which by system, and under the sanction of their founder's name elaborated into a kind of art, became an elementary part of education. A part of their duty and discipline, it was also their great solace and encouragement. The beloved and the lover, side by side through their long days of eager labor, and their brief nights of delightful rest, above all on the battlefield, became respectively, *αἰτής*, the hearer, and *εἰσπράξας*, the inspirer; the elder inspiring the younger with his own strength and noble taste in things.

What, it has been asked, what was there to occupy persons of the privileged class in Lacedæmon from morning to night, thus cut off as they were from politics and business, and many of the common interests of men's lives? Our Platonic visitor would have asked rather, Why this strenuous task-work, day after day; why this loyalty to a system, so costly to you individually, though it may be thought to have survived its original purpose; this laborious, endless education, which does not propose to give you anything very useful or enjoyable in itself? An intelligent young Spartan might have replied: "To the end that I myself may be a perfect work of art, issuing thus into the eyes of all Greece." He might have observed — we may safely observe for him — that the institutions of his country, whose he was, had a beauty in themselves, as we may observe also of some, at least, of our own institutions, educational or religious; that they bring out, for instance, the lights and shadows of human character, and relieve the present by maintaining in it an ideal sense of the past. He might have added that he had his friendships to solace him; and to encourage him, the sense of honor.

Honor, friendship, loyalty to the ideal of the past, himself as a work of art! There was much of course in his answer. Yet still after all, to understand, to be capable of such motives, was itself but a

result of that exacting discipline of character we are trying to account for; and the question still recurs, *Cui bono?* Why? with no prospect of Israel's reward, are you as scrupulous, minute, self-taxing, as he? A tincture of asceticism in the Lacedæmonian rule may remind us again of the monasticism of the Middle Ages. But then, monastic severity was for the purging of a troubled conscience, or for the hope of an immense prize, neither of which conditions is to be supposed here. In fact the surprise of St. Paul, as a practical man, at the slightness of the reward for which a Greek spent himself, natural as it is about all pagan perfection, is especially applicable about these Lacedæmonians, who indeed had actually invented that so corruptible and essentially worthless parsley crown in place of the more tangible prizes of an earlier age. Strange people! Where, precisely, may be the spring of action in you, who are so severe to yourselves; you who, in the words of Plato's supposed objector that the rules of the ideal state are not to be envied, have nothing you can really call your own; and are like hired servants in your own houses; *qui manducatis panem doloris?*

Another day-dream, you may say, about those obscure ancient people, it was ever so difficult really to know, who had hidden their actual life with so much success; but certainly a quite natural dream upon the paradoxical things we are told of them, on good authority. It is because they make us ask that question; puzzle us by a paradoxical idealism in life; are thus distinguished from their neighbors; that, like some of our old English places of education, though we might not like to live always at school there, it is good to visit them on occasion; as some philosophic Athenians, as we have seen, loved to do, at least in thought.

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From The Leisure Hour,  
STATESMEN OF EUROPE.

SPAIN.

I.

THE changes that come over men and nations are constantly pressing themselves upon the attention of the philosophical student of history, and no country more invites to reflection upon this point than Spain, once so powerful and glorious. Only a few centuries ago she was mistress of two hemispheres, the Old and the New



World trembled at the nod of her king.  
Now Shakespeare's words apply to her:—

But yesterday the word of Cæsar might  
Have stood against the world; now lies he  
there,  
And none so poor to do him reverence.

That once glorious country has sunk in the political world to the level of the least important and least influential State in Europe. Yet, though it is not probable that Spain will ever regain her past position, she may still play her part in the concerns of the Continent, extend her influence in other directions, and build up new liberties and new hopes within her own borders, if continued peace and a wise government be her lot. No country has, probably, suffered more of late years than this. Few have been more politically convulsed. It is well to cast a bird's-eye view over her politics during the last decades, in order fully to comprehend the present state of affairs.

When Alfonso XII. ascended the throne, he delivered the land from the state of anarchy into which it had been reduced by six years of internal convulsions, and opened out for her the prospect of a long period of peace. Young, patriotic, disciplined by exile and misfortune, the adolescent king had brought to Spain a fund of courage and good-will towards the hard task of regenerating his kingdom. A good sovereign and a good citizen, he regarded himself but in the light of the first of the Spaniards, and gathered around himself without party distinctions the eminent men of all shades, respecting their various opinions, and managing their susceptibilities. After having shown himself a soldier, he gave proof of his ability as a ruler. A few errors he certainly committed, but these may be put down rather to his youth than to any other cause. They, however, did not hinder him from winning the hearts of his subjects, who, after so many years of sanguinary struggles, desired ardently to enter upon a period of repose and peace. Notwithstanding the hostile efforts of his political enemies, Alfonso's reign promised to be long and peaceful. Then came his premature death. In this embarrassing situation, it was felt that the only safe course lay in uniting all the monarchical forces, and in putting aside, for a time at least, all the old classical distinctions of party.

It was at this critical moment that Don Antonio Canovas del Castillo gave a brilliant proof of patriotism and attachment to the throne by advising the young regent

to call into power Señor Sagasta, the leader of the Liberal Opposition, and to secure in this wise the support of the Liberal Progressists, who otherwise might have endangered the existence of the dynasty.

Canovas, now again prime minister, is certainly one of the most remarkable men of modern Spain. Born at Malaga in 1824, he studied philosophy and law at Madrid. At the university he had as his fellow-student the after-statesman and brilliant orator, Emilio Castelar. Canovas devoted himself to literature and journalism, and the historical lectures delivered by him in the Athenæum at Madrid proved great successes.

In 1852, when returned by Malaga as deputy to the Cortes, his oratorical powers soon brought him into notice; for he, together with Sagasta and Castelar, are considered the best modern Spanish speakers. Eloquence has an extraordinary importance in that country, and it is quite astonishing to an outsider to read occasionally in an Opposition newspaper the warmest and most glowing praise of speeches delivered by their political opponents.

Two years after, as Spanish *chargé d'affaires* at Rome, Canovas drew up the formula of the Concordat between Spain and the Holy See. Twice minister of finance and once of the colonies, it was he who presented the bill for the abolition of slavery in the Spanish dominions. On the fall of the ministry he became again a simple deputy, siding with the Liberal Opposition; but in 1868 he was once more called to take a leading part both as writer and orator in the revolutionary movement which then broke out, and which had for its object the bestowing of the crown upon the Duke de Montpensier.

After the failure of this movement he went to France, where he made overtures to Donna Isabella, and exercised a very important influence on the education of Don Alfonso, substituting for the clerical, absolute ideas of his mother more modern if not entirely liberal ones. For some time he had secretly carried on a widespread propaganda in favor of Don Alfonso during the different forms of government that had been on trial in Spain, and he saw that the moment had come to strike. It was he who urged on the Spanish nobility to send an address to Don Alfonso on his birthday in 1874, and himself wrote Don Alfonso's answer to that address. The last day of that year the young man was proclaimed king by the Spanish troops, and Canovas became prime minister in the so-called Conciliation Cabinet.

It was Canovas's desire to win over the Progressists, and to form, together with them, a new Liberal union of Conservatives, keeping out the Absolutists and Clericals who had brought Isabella to grief; yet his actions belied these intentions, for he felt himself obliged to condemn what the Republic had initiated. In order to win the clergy from Don Carlos's cause, he entered into negotiations with the pope, re-establishing the Concordat of 1851. In formulating the Constitution, Canovas had declared himself in favor of maintaining the universal suffrage established by the Republic; but, meeting with opposition in the Cabinet on this point, he resigned, retaining, however, a paramount influence over the king as his private adviser, and returning to power again after a brief delay.

It was during his second term of office that Canovas had the good fortune to witness the end of the Carlist War; and immediately after the Cortes assembled to vote a constitution, the great question at issue being that of religious toleration. The Ultramontanes struggled for the old-fashioned exclusive "Catholicism," whilst the Republicans under Castelar claimed entire liberty of worship. Canovas steered midway, and declared for "Catholicism" as the State religion, and for tolerance to all others. By this compromise he offended the clergy and a large number of the people. After a time his continued successes and strong position excited the jealousy of many politicians who were anxious to get into power; and this feeling led to the formation of the so-called Constitutional party under Sagasta, Alonso Martinez, and Vega y Armijo, which was composed of the fusion of Centralists and Liberal Constitutionals.

This party, which came to be known as the Dynastic Liberals, may be regarded as the starting point of the new political situation in Spain, which has lasted from the end of 1878 until the present day. They carried opposition at one time to the length of refusal to attend the Cortes, in which attitude they persevered for nearly a year, thus enabling Canovas to pass unchecked some important measures, such as the suppression of universal suffrage and a law against the freedom of the press.

In 1879 Canovas fell in consequence of disturbances in Cuba, but only to be recalled as head of the Cabinet in 1880, to fall again upon a financial question, and to be returned to power a third time in January, 1884. This third return was marked by strong reactionary tendencies, the fore-

most of which was the appointment of Pidal as minister of agriculture, who pushed his political and religious ideas so far as to demand of the Cortes the restitution of the temporal power of the Holy See. This reactionary policy brought about a coalition of all the Liberal parties, from the Dynastic Liberals to the Federalists under Pi Margal and the Radicals under Ruiz Zorrilla. Martinez Campos was the first to abandon this heterogeneous coalition, taking with him the Centralists. This defection called forth a protest from Castelar, who declared that the only result would be to drive the extreme Republicans into open insurrection.

It was about this time that Spain was afflicted by a cholera visitation, and Canovas, knowing that the king's death would be the end of his tenure of office, endeavored to prevent Alfonso from visiting the infected towns; but the king, consulting only his courage and his love for his people, would not listen to his minister's entreaties, and gained by his fearless conduct the applause of the nation. In the same year, 1885, occurred the incident of the Caroline Islands. On this occasion the Spaniards manifested a noble patriotic spirit, and proved once more how invincible a nation can be when all its factions unite to defend the national dignity.

Not long after, Alfonso died, and Canovas, who could not hide from himself the unpopularity of his government, most nobly advised the queen regent to call upon Sagasta to form a cabinet. He declared that a Sagasta ministry was the only one possible for the time, adding, however, that he should not hesitate to combat such a Cabinet if ever, or whenever, it should show anti-monarchical principles. He himself tried to effect a reconciliation with Romero Robledo upon becoming one of the leading men in Spain; but Robledo had coalesced with the Dynastic Left, under Lopez Dominguez, the nephew and successor of Serrano.

Canovas is a man well-preserved for his years. He is of medium height, his features are intelligent and energetic, and he speaks, as we have said, with extreme facility and eloquence. Being asked to give his opinion upon political affairs in general in Spain, and upon the so frequent recurrence of political crises in that country, he remarked that these crises were ill understood outside the land, that strangers did not sufficiently take into account the peculiar condition of the country and the constitution of its factions. He said: "People forget that our parliamentary in-

stitutions do not function like those of other countries, because our political manners and our customs are different. There are at the two extremes of the political arena two intransigent parties, the Carlists in the rural districts, the Advanced Republicans and Socialists in the large cities, who violently manifest their sentiments in troubled hours. In the centre, between these two poles, there is the great mass of the nation represented by all classes of Spanish society, who excite themselves little, and who remain calm and resigned, no matter whether Sagasta or I direct the affairs of the monarchy. Notwithstanding all that is said to the contrary, it is not the mode of government but the manners and customs of a country which influence its elections, its parliaments, its majorities and minorities. It is on that account that abroad people do not understand the necessary and preponderating rôle which the royal prerogative plays with us."

This matter of the royal prerogative requires a little explanation. In Spain ideas of constitutional government are too new to be thoroughly comprehended of the people, with the result that, electors having always been pliable, governments have always had a large majority, so that when Cabinets were worn out they had to be superseded, not by Parliament, but by the intervention, reserved by the constitution, of the sovereign. Alfonso XII. from the beginning of his reign, declared that he would direct all his efforts towards bringing alternately into power the Liberal and Conservative parties, without taking into account the intermediate or extreme sections, which he believed could be absorbed into the Conservative right or the frankly Liberal party. Alfonso XII. had such confidence in this theory that, after being a few years on the throne, he requested Canovas del Castillo, much to the surprise of that statesman, to resign, because he thought his Cabinet had lasted long enough, and that the time had come for bringing the Liberals again into power. It is these views, gathered from her husband, that Queen Christina has also been applying. She has set aside all intermediate combinations, in order to reach that distinct division of parties which Alfonso XII. had adopted and energetically defended. He sought in this way, and she strives after him, to realize a great idea, the formation of a constitutional Opposition. Alfonso had even endeavored to prepare the elements of such a body. He believed, and rightly, that it would be the

safety of Spain if party passions could be made to yield to the conclusions of sound political reasoning.

Don Praxedes Mateo Sagasta, who has several times now succeeded Canovas, is undoubtedly the most popular politician in Spain. Under him the land has almost unlearned the vice of pronunciamientos, and has settled down into a sober tranquillity that twenty years ago the most sanguine observer could hardly have ventured to predict. His fall last year was due to court intrigue, though how far the queen herself was to blame for giving encouragement to the cabal against her minister, it would be hard to decide. So far her regency has been remarkable for the tact with which she has rallied all parties, except a few extremists, in support of the infant king. It must, of course, be remembered that there is in Spain a party, with influence out of proportion to its numerical strength, which dreams of bringing back the days of aristocratic privilege and clerical power, and that this party exercises great pressure at court. In Spain constitutional monarchy has only grown up in the course of the present century, and during that period has suffered several relapses into absolutism.

Sagasta was born in 1827, and pursued his study at an engineering school in Madrid, practising later as an engineer in a provincial town, for which place he was elected deputy to the Cortes in 1854. Forced to flee to France on account of the active part he took in the insurrection of 1856, he returned to Spain after the amnesty and became professor in the engineering school of Madrid, as well as one of the editors of the *Iberia*, the most important organ of the Progressist party. Compromised in Prim's movement, he was obliged once more to take refuge in France; but the revolution which overthrew Isabella brought him back in 1878 as minister of the interior in Prim's first Cabinet, when, abandoning most of his Liberal ideas and breaking with his friend Zorrilla, he repressed with a high hand the republican disorders in the various provinces.

On being transferred from the ministry of the interior to that of foreign affairs, Sagasta took a leading part in the negotiations of Serrano's government to provide a king for Spain. After having failed in several applications, Sagasta and Prim bethought them of Leopold of Hohenzollern. He at first accepted, but was compelled to refuse afterwards on account of

the political complications to which his candidature gave rise. Sagasta then turned to Amadeo, Duke of Aosta, and succeeded in persuading Victor Emmanuel to allow his son to accept the Spanish crown.

After his accession Sagasta once more became minister of the interior. He was brought face to face with the hard problem of the Carlist movement in the north, and did not succeed in crushing it. Indeed, it has been maintained that it is only when in opposition that he shows great activity and develops great success. When in power he seems to sink into a species of Oriental fatalism and indifference. At this period of his career he continued always to declare himself a monarchist, and inveighed against republican ideas, though in point of fact, he did not seem to be so violently opposed to them. Subsequently, not feeling sure of how he would fare with the son of the dethroned queen, and unwilling on the one hand to have anything to do with Don Carlos, and on the other to undertake the probably vague research for a foreign prince who would repeat Amadeo's experiment, he adopted Castelar's views of the opportunism of a republic. On the fall of the Serrano government, and the accession of Don Alfonso to the throne, Sagasta, for a while, retired from public life; but, soon after, he, together with other members of the old Constitutional party, declared their adhesion to the new king. It was on this occasion that the Moderate Opposition elected Sagasta as their leader.

They were opposed to Canovas, and carried their opposition to that foolish point of remaining absent from the Cortes, in consequence of which the minister, of course, had an entirely free hand. Financial difficulties were then, as they are still, the cause of most of the troubles of the Spanish government. Sagasta is a free trader, Canovas is a protectionist; but neither of them has been able to do anything with a State which, undaunted by annual deficits, dispenses entirely with accounts of actual revenue and expenditure, and is content with budget estimates. Such a State cannot, except by courtesy, be described as possessing a financial system at all. In 1883 Sagasta was charged with the task of forming a new Cabinet, and he succeeded in selecting his ministers from the Liberal ranks, and in keeping in his Cabinet Vega y Armijo and Martinez Campos. The Liberal press gave its entire support to this new ministry. It was in this year that the *Mano Negra*, a

kind of Spanish Fenian Association, first appeared in Andalusia. Its object was to free the land from the tyranny of the landlord, using even criminal means to attain this end. The government showed great energy in suppressing this league, and they would doubtless have remained in power much longer had not Alfonso's unfortunate visit to Paris, after his visit to Berlin brought about their fall. Thanks to the generous resignation of Canovas, Sagasta found himself in power again in 1885, on the death of Alfonso. His Cabinet consisted of very mixed elements, extending from the Centralists to the Democrats, and it was the general belief at the time, both in the country and abroad, that a new era had herewith dawned for Spain.

The proclamation of an amnesty for press and political offences partly succeeded in gaining some popularity for the Cabinet. Despite the coalition of nearly all the different parties, the government, by using a great deal of pressure, succeeded in securing a large majority in both Houses. At the opening of the Cortes in May, 1886, the speech from the throne announced that various social and economic reforms, such as the introduction of civil marriage and of universal suffrage, should be discussed. These were all measures urgently demanded by the Spanish democratic party. It was also promised that attention should be given to financial reform. Camacho, who had already once been minister of finance, and who had fallen because a project of his to reduce the national debt offended the national pride of the Spaniards, incurred their displeasure by bringing forward a project of selling crown forests. This was, however, so unfavorably received that he had to resign, and was succeeded by Puig Cerver, who found a way out of the deficit without recurring to that means. The displeasure felt at this and other circumstances following upon the birth of the baby king obliged Sagasta to resign; but he was recalled by the queen regent, who felt full confidence in him, and again entrusted him with the making of a Cabinet. He formed one that was accepted with coldness by the Conservatives, distrust by the Democrats, and hostility by the Republicans. The main opposition to the government came from the Dynastic Left, who the next year divided into two factions, of which one—the minority—supported the Cabinet; while the other, under Lopez Dominguez, declared that the government had failed to realize the Democratic tendencies of the country. In the same year

there came about the unexpected fusion of the followers of Lopez Dominguez with those of Romero Robledo, under the name of the National party, or Liberal Reform party. By this time Sagasta had lost a large portion not only of his material might, but, what was worse, his moral influence had declined. That he was conscious of this fact is proved by the way in which he sought to overcome the crises which were constantly threatening his Cabinet. The parties against him, as well as those who nominally supported him, were too diverse in their aims, the difficulties against which he had to contend too great.

As in many other countries, the main difficulties were financial and moral. The continued ill-success met with by the various finance ministers who sought to introduce financial reforms was attributed, now to their free trade, now to their protectionist policy. In point of fact, neither was to blame. Moret and Puig Cerver, both of them free-traders, were accused as violently of ruining the country as Camacho the protectionist. It is impossible to ascribe the failures in economical reform which occurred under the Liberal government to free trade, for free trade never had a fair chance in Spain, even when free traders held the portfolio. The real fundamental cause of the continued financial disorder must be sought in the incapacity of the Spanish people to free themselves from the plague spots that disgrace their administration; the corruption of the bureaucracy; the curious personal character that pervades Spanish politics, which are merely regarded by politicians as a means to an end, as a trade that should lead to power, riches, and consideration. Ostentation, a love of luxury, the constant augmentation of the demands upon life, the natural tendency to idleness, and many such cognate matters, combined with the inherent idiosyncrasies of the Spanish character in public and private life, have all conduced to their financial ruin. Here lies the real secret of Spain's difficulties, the real cause why she cannot rise to a higher place among European nations. The hollow rhetoric that reigns in the Cortes also vastly hinders the progress of real business. Thus, though certain measures were promised to the land again and again in ministerial programmes, their realization seemed ever delayed.

In 1888 Sagasta once more remodelled his Cabinet, but had to reckon with the discontented Democrats, whose party is pretty strong in Spain, and who are urgent

and imperative in their demands that promises shall at last become realities. To appease and conciliate these, Sagasta chose Manuel Becerra, the veteran leader of the Spanish Democracy, as colonial minister; but when it was found that this too was but a palliative, Martos, another foremost leader of the Democrats, joined himself, together with Romero Robledo and Cassola, in open warfare against Sagasta, for they thought they saw but too clearly that the prime minister did not think of carrying into effect the promised reforms of the constitution. They formed a middle group, which called itself the Conspirators; and owing to their exertions the Spanish Cortes has to deal with a crisis which remains permanent, both Conspirators and Conservatives working against Sagasta, whom they do not regard as faithful to the pledges he has given the nation. The only danger in this combination was, and is, that the Liberal party, split up into so many various factions, might disintegrate itself. To save it from this catastrophe, there was formed the so-called National party, with Lopez Dominguez at its head, who endeavored to bring about a fusion, or at least a compromise.

Lopez Dominguez, a nephew of Marshal Serrano, was born in 1825. He was a member of the Spanish mission on the staff of the allied armies in the Crimea, and was present at the battles of Solferino and Magenta. Elected to the Cortes after the campaign of Morocco, he proved himself a distinguished orator, and was entrusted, at a later date, with the portfolio of war. He gradually came to take the place as chief of the Left which had been filled by his uncle, whose death occurred in 1885, and, in a measure, it is his uncle's traditions that he carries on. It is curious to know that the death of Marshal Serrano should have occurred the day after that of the son of the queen he had dethroned. He had been regent of the kingdom until the accession of Amadeo, and was again named dictator in 1874, after the fall of the Republic. For some years after Alfonso's advent he took no important part in political life, but when Canovas returned to power he once more became an important figure.

The party opposed to that of the Dynastic Left is that known as the Liberal Dynastic. Their leader is General Arsenio Martinez Campos. He was imprisoned after the fall of Amadeo because he



refused to recognize the Republic, but was shortly after released, and played a great part in the restoration of the monarchy. Entrusted with supreme command in Cuba, he succeeded in an incredibly short space of time, partly by military, partly by diplomatic tactics, in putting an end to the disorders which had lasted in that island for seven years. He also endeavored to impress, but in vain, upon the home government the necessity for giving way to the financial and political aspirations of the Cubans. Prime minister for a brief period, he afterwards became governor of Madrid, which charge he resigned in 1888 on a question of etiquette. At the end of the same year, he saw himself obliged to separate from Sagasta on the question of army reform, and since then has been the leader of the Liberal Right in the Senate.

Moret y Prendergast, another pillar of the Liberal party, is a native of Cadiz, who for many years held the chair of political economy at Madrid. A consistent adherent to Liberal principles, he belonged to the free-trade party, and in support of a free-trade policy he held many public conferences. Elected deputy in 1863, he soon won for himself a foremost place in the parliamentary world. He also held for a time the portfolio of minister of the colonies, and, thanks to him, slavery was abolished in the Philippine Islands. A partisan of Amadeo, he was for a while minister of finance under his government, and was afterwards sent as an ambassador to London. Under Alfonso he was minister of the interior, and at the king's death he was called by Sagasta to fill the post of minister of foreign affairs. In 1888 he was once more elected minister of the interior in the new Sagasta Cabinet, and he has always continued to be one of the most faithful supporters of the Regent Maria Christina.

From Temple Bar.

#### A CONCORD OF THE STEPPE.

Sketches in the shadow of famine. Russia, 1891.

"SCRATCH a Russian," says the proverb, "and you will find the Tartar;" but it all depends where you scratch him. Where, that is, in Russia. By the northern Dvina, you might find a white bear, on the Dniestr a Turk. So, too, in inquiries of the country, it is forgotten that there are

many Russias, each a kingdom, and as many peoples.

Going south over the Great Plain from the southern border of the Samoyeds, one plunges, after crossing the frozen tundras, through interminable forest to the latitude of St. Petersburg. Then wheat begins to show itself, clearings are more frequent, and, though the forest remains, it is no longer omnipotent. Beyond Moscow the dark pines shrink into ordered woods, the land "rolls," and the first firm turf appears. It is the Russian *Veldt*, the country of Toorghaynieffs' "Birouk," and of his wonderful sketch, "The Prairie." After crossing it the trees slip out of sight, and the eye ranges for miles over a black, bare upland, which seems as level as the sea, but hides in sudden deep hollows the woods which have sunk there for shelter from the fierce Steppe winds, and the villages which have been built among them. It is the home, for the most part, of the little Russian; the country's belt of gold, and, perhaps, the richest land in Europe.

It stretches from the Pruth almost to the Urals, and upon it the scattered people live closest, and live by the plough.

Further south and east the black downs break abruptly, with outcrops, here and there, of chalk upon the real Steppe, which stretches its dead level thence three hundred miles to the marshes of the Caspian and the salted Tundras of Turkestan. There the Russian blood is mixed with Cossack and Kirghese, its instincts become nomadic, and it mounts a horse. One must return to the upper Steppe to see the Muscovite as God and time have made him; the man on whose strong back the empire is supported, and who is fain, at the present time, to fill his belly with husks on which not even his swine will feed.

To see the real Russian one must see him here. Further north he is stunted by the hard conditions of his life; further south he is relaxed, and often a vagrant, in the land of his grapes and of the summer drouth. But on the black earth he is rooted deeper than English oak. The land is the mistress of many peoples, it is the Russian's wife. The hand he puts to the plough never turns to another trade, and he clings to the fields of his youth with the dumb, intuitive yearning of the brutes, often finding his way back to them to die, with some counterpart of their "homing" instinct. He is a somewhat gross creature, animal, impassive, pagan, superstitious, callous rather than cruel, often drunk, always lying, seldom clean.

Yet against this, his sublime indifference to fate, his childish faith, his unfailing hospitality, and absence of all hypocrisy make him one of the most interesting ruralists in Europe.

The chance of studying him, from his own stove, as it were, is seldom accorded to a stranger, and, under ordinary conditions, which include a variety of live stock, from pigs to parasites, it would be still seldomer accepted. When shooting and hunting in Russia it often happens that one has to put up at the *stárosta's*, or headman of the village, but one learns nothing of the peasant life by such visits, except through the nose.

When, therefore, the opportunity of sharing it with voluntary conditions of cleanliness was offered me, I accepted gladly; the more so as the men with whom I was to live were interesting otherwise than as Russian peasants.

It is difficult for people in England, where everything is debated and nothing very much believed, to understand the ferment which the neo-Christianity of Count Leff Tolstoi has worked in a seething vat of doubt, oppression, and despair.

In certain circles, the nervous circles, it is still the most vivid subject of talk; whole nights being often spent in the discussion of, perhaps, a single careless sentence, unessential to the author's aim.

When I was staying in Moscow, amongst men, most of whom are now lying in unknown prisons, awaiting trial for treason, and who were then steeped in plans of breathless moment, a challenge on behalf of the philosopher of Tula was sufficient to drown their own debate, and to lift them in passionate expostulation and argument to the region of imaginary ethics for the rest of the evening.

That, however, means less than it seems. The curious faculty of mental detachment from the absorbing question of the moment is endemic in Muscovite zealots, and is only equalled by their fondness for treating facts hypothetically. Men, whose one watchword was caution and who would arrive at their rendezvous by all manner of dark disguises, in an hour were shouting, gesticulating, babbling all at once, twenty or thirty together; and would so pass the night, around the samovar, drinking infinite tea, and deciding only on a fresh meeting. It was neither magnificent nor war, but schoolgirl's hysteria, an outbreak of repressed puberty—in a people.

But impractical and pernicious talker as he may be, the Russian, even when fermented, can be something more, for men

of every class have taken Tolstoi at his word, and left fortune, houses, brethren, father, wife, and children to cast in their lot with foxes and fowls of the air. It is late in the day, and difficult besides, to summarize the count's philosophy; he has described it, and its evolution, at length for English readers in "Christ's Christianity," and even so is misunderstood.

Briefly it insists on the equal sanctity of all life, on the equal evil of all contention, of the absolute negation of property; which imply—to put extreme cases, but cases which Count Tolstoi defended in conversation—that a man may not slay a mad dog to save his child's life, may not forcibly interfere to protect a lunatic from himself, must give his last loaf to a starving stranger though his own children cry with hunger, and leave his one coat with any who crave it of him.

A wintry creed, and one which tests the stanchness of human sympathy; yet even of vengeful Nihilists it has made disciples; nor of them alone. Men of every occupation, and of none, have joined the little company of passivists; they wander wherever work may take them, receiving no payment for it but food and shelter, or form themselves into brotherhoods with nothing apiece and all things in common.

It was with such a colony that I found myself at the end of the summer. Its organizer I had known when he was adjutant to the late emperor, and the wildest of the young Guardsmen in Petersburg. His life at that time would certainly have been outside the tests of even the mildest morality; he could jest in half-a-dozen languages, and jest well; he was brilliant, fascinating, universally admired; everything seemed within his reach. He had been named for the government of an important province; was heir to a vast property; a whole district of the richest land, the dowry of an ancestress, a Tartar princess, bearing his name.

When he wrote last to me he was living as the commonest peasant, in the universal red shirt and bast shoes; his code of morality was of the strictest; he was every one's servant, and overflowing with love and good-will to all. The change was stupendous; he had gone from pole to pole; curiously enough, many pious persons, who were interested in him, thought he had gone to the devil.

He wrote, "We are utterly uncivilized here, but come and see us if you are not afraid." I was not, and went.

Of civilization, indeed, as generally understood, there was but little evidence;

of civility much; in fact one realized for the first time, amid men bound by common duties for the common good, the essential quality of civilness. We ate, it is true, with wooden ladles from the same bowl; we passed the nights indifferently, wrapped in a *shooba* in the barn, or out among the wandering flocks; we took no interest in the arts, and little in letters; we might, most of us, have been cleaner; but, for all that, we were civic in its best senses, and that small village of the Steppe was a *State*, ideally independent.

Men came to it from every quarter of the empire, soldiers, tshinovniks, lawyers, priests, artists, peasants, and petty tradesmen; men often of delicate nurture, whose feet had grown black with travel, and their backs bent with the spade; the clothes they wore and the tools of their trade were their sole possessions, and their tenure even of these was always terminable by another's greater need.

They seemed for the most part a gentle, noble, generous manner of men, regally unconditioned, and above the worst turns of fate; they came, worked, and went their way; some to other farms, some to prison or the prison mad-house—for heterodoxy is a crime in Russia, and men, who for conscience sake, refuse to serve the State, as conscripts or otherwise, are often treated as insane till their reason is unhinged—some, disenchanted, to return to the lives which they had left.

For at Vlest no profession of faith was demanded. There was nothing to tempt the mere professor. Poverty, poor food, and hard work are temptations which most men can resist. Neither was any uniformity of thought or even of action looked for. The damnatory summing up of Israel's backsliding was become our axiom of integrity: "every man did what was right in his own eyes." But he was supposed to keep them open.

He was expected also to help himself, and as there was no paid labor, and—theoretically—no money to obtain it, self-help was a necessity.

Perhaps a description of the day's work at Vlest at harvest-time may be interesting from a social as well as from a national point of view.

The little village lay in one great wrinkle of the black down. Nothing was visible above the dark, rolling swell of the land, but the purple distance and the open sky. Then, suddenly, a deep cleft opened at one's feet, full of green leaves and the whiteness of cottage walls. In autumn, when the maples were dyed red, the nar-

row valley, stained to its depths with crimson over flakes of white, sprang with almost vehement beauty out of the gloomy world, and seemed to be in hiding there with its scarlet secret.

There was a little green lake in the hollow of the wood, where we bathed, carrying down every morning a yoke of pails for the water of the day's use. Afterwards the rooms were cleaned, beds made, and breakfast eaten on the little balcony of the central house. The colonists being all vegetarians, and bound by Tolstoi's theory that a man's consumption should be independent of his neighbor's products, the fare was spare and simple, even before the lean arm of famine had reached that table. Black rye bread, somewhat gritty, milk, a decoction of roast acorns, not very drinkable, butter and melons, made up the usual repast. Sometimes an early riser tried experiments with oatmeal porridge, but it was considered a needless, and was always a smoky luxury. Afterwards there was housework to be seen to by those free for it, for it must be understood that any system of drainage was not only non-existent, but would have been discountenanced at Vlest. The washing of the little settlement was also done at the same time; but it must be allowed that this labor, considering the number it concerned, was slight; for cleanliness is a subordinate virtue in the Tolstoyan cosmogony, and there was a marked tendency to abide for some time by a shirt which had, by happy accident, profited by its excursion to the lake. "Cleanliness," says the master, "is not a vice."

Those not engaged in or about the house worked on the farm or in the fields. It was the time of harvest, a poor, thin harvest; a harvest like a yellow mask on the face of hunger, but yet not without its joys.

The labor of it was borne by hand, for there was no money for machines, though, strange to say, no sentiment against them; and the labor was heavy. The Russian thereabout cuts grain as grass, with a short scythe, not with a sickle; and he works through a long day. Of course, while any corn was standing, all hands were in the fields before the morning star had set, and we came home through the reddening apples under the moon; the midday porridge of *kácha*—a kind of buckwheat—being eaten at some corner of a wood, out of the scorching sun, where the laborers, men and women, stretched in a huddled line in the shade, slept through the hottest hour of the day.

The work of stacking even that scant harvest was also heavy, for not a sheaf could be left out on the defenceless Steppe, where the wolves, and the winds and snows of winter would soon have scattered it. Everything for miles around had to be brought into the great farmyard; about which a wattle fence of fifteen feet held beast and storm at bay.

The grain was threshed, as it was cut, in the immense barn, the nominal property of the *barin*, or manor lord, and the method was pretty enough to be described. The barn was a vast building with high peaked thatch, whose eaves came almost to the ground. A low cross-gable, thrust out on one side, made room below for the team of four lean horses which worked the thrasher.

They revolved all day in a mud-floored circle, their driver, perched upon the windlass, cracking his whip, and urging them with a shrill, sweet, bird-like whistle which one could hear far down in the fields. Inside was the ceaseless whirl of the thrasher, the clatter of hoofs, the shrill whistling, and the babble of women's voices and laughter.

Two great sunbeams from either door lay like gold bars in the dusty air, and across them the women moved, raking the straw and binding it as it flew out fiercely from the thrasher's throat. They were dressed in short skirts of the universal Russian red, which is quite a note in the country's color, bodices of red and snowy white, and kerchiefs round their hair of silver green, white, and poppy yellow. One saw them vaguely, through the dust of threshing which filled all the barn, shifting to and fro, a dim kaleidoscope of delightful color, and when they stepped into a sunbeam they seemed to stain it red. They worked, and sang, and joked, broadly among themselves with a fine animal unconcern, and with the sad-faced man who fed the thrasher's mouth, muttering some prayer for much and beautiful grain, though he knew how poor was the crop.

Outside, the bundles of straw were linked to a long rope attached to a team of horses and so drawn to the top of the stack, where another woman stood to tread it into place, and fling down the bight of the lifting rope.

She looked even more picturesque than those in the barn, the brilliant skirt, the snowy linen that burst from the crimson stomacher, for she had loosed its red laces while she worked, and the lemon kerchief on her head, being sharply outlined as she

stood knee-deep in that mountain of yellow straw.

At midday there was a shrill summons from the orchard, and the women tumbled headlong out of the yard, laughing and struggling together to reach the thin smoke of the spent fire which spoke of dinner. We lay under the young apples to eat it, in very primitive fashion, a pot between four or five, and a wooden spoon apiece. Soup of the red fungus of the woods, the everlasting *kácha*, milk, rye-bread, *kvass*, and melons made up the meal, and the dogs cleaned the pots; whether any other assistance was offered in that direction before supper I never discovered. I think not.

The afternoon repeated mostly the morning's toil; at five there was generally a samovar to be seen, and a good deal of very weak tea to be drunk if one was within hail; but when the threshing and stacking were over, and the ploughs afield, the next meal came at eight. It was even simpler than the others, being often only black bread and tea, with sometimes a little fruit, blueberries from the wood, or nuts. After supper we sat among the shavings in the carpenter's shop, and sang songs to the *balalaika*—the Russian guitar—talked, or read aloud. There was a little room below the storehouse whose small window burnt like a glow-worm every evening in the slope of the wood, where any of the village children who cared to come were taught to read. Their teacher was a man, splendidly made, and with the face of a Jewish prophet, who had left the first society in Moscow, where his wife remained to spend his millions, to wander barefoot without a home.

We spent many days and nights thereafter together, he and I; back to back for warmth in the straw of country carts under the frosty moon, and, later, in the night dens of thieves, harlots, and plotters of all kinds in Moscow, but I never heard a word from his lips of which the purest saint could be ashamed. Yet he was but one of many there, and no exception.

Till the harvest was gathered in, one heard only vague fears of famine, yet every one knew it must be. Those who had felt, year by year, the insufficiency of the full summers, could tell almost on their fingers how far the present crop would go, yet not a hand was moved to extend it.

The Russian maxim of "Let be!" pervades the whole country. The *stárosta* of our village put the whole case for inaction, superstition, and fatalism when riding with me one day after some strayed horses.

The black soil was like dust, and he sighed heavily as his mare sank in the light stuff.

"Ah, bátiushka," he said sadly, "what land is this? It is like a woman broken with sorrow; how can she feed her child?"

"Has it been so all the summer?" I asked.

"Not so, indeed. There was frost in the spring, and men said, 'Frost and fair weather,' for so it is, though the apples were bitten. But then came the dryness; and the mass was said in the fields, but it went to nothing. And then we dug up the died-drunks —"

"The what?" I exclaimed.

"The drunkards, your honor. Often it is that when the drunkards are pulled out of their graves and flung into pools of water, that rain will come; we know not why. But not rain came only, but hail, and fierce storm, and fire, and withered the little that was grown. Then, after that, dryness again, and now," he shrugged his shoulders, "the famine."

"Must there be famine?" I asked.

"Surely," he said, with a smile, "the grain that we have is soon eaten and then — what?"

"Will no provision be made for the future?"

"Who should make provision? Now we can buy much, and eat much, afterward — well, the little father will not see us die?"

That was the last word to be said; the Russian peasant has been brought up by hand, and now cannot use a spoon; he thinks he has but to open his mouth and it will be filled.

Treated worse than a dog, ground down by cruel taxes, compelled into perpetual debauch by a paternal government which opens, against the protests of the village *mir*, imperial *kabakée* or taverns in their midst, the keepers of which are sworn to sell a certain quantity of spirits per quarter; cheated by his many masters, and debarred from justice in his country's courts, the peasant never loses confidence in his emperor, nor his faith in God. "In spite of every temptation," boasts the *Novoye Vremya*, in a recent article, after giving heartrending details of men dying on bread made of pigweed, goosefoot, chaff, oil, and manure, "our people submissively endure it all; they exclaim 'God's will is at the bottom of it. He gave, and he takes away!'" One wonders if it would be possible for such a people ever to be goaded into revolt.

At Vest, a mere green hollow in the

rolling, boundless blackness of the Steppe, one learnt little of the outside world, and it was not until after the great fair of Malouga that one heard the first low growl of famine.

We were three days of bullock travel from the town, and allowed a fourth to cover unforeseen adventures. Two *vosy*, or country carts, with a span of oxen to each, and half-a-dozen cattle for sale made up our modest caravan, and three of us were their escort. Bullock transport is not to be commended to people in a hurry, but it is an index in disguise to the pastoral character. The man who can sit behind oxen for six days, and not feel at the end of them as though he had wasted half his life, has some claims to be considered agricultural. Yet, if they were long, the days moved, and the nights were an enchantment.

We started before dawn, while the hollows were full of milky whiteness, which turned with daylight to a floating mist, and clung, in twisted shreds and wisps, to hut and tree, long after the sun had risen. It was cold at that hour with some degrees of frost, though the sun at midday was more than warm in a cloudless sky. Before sunset we used to halt, if possible, under the lee of some remnant of woodland for shelter from the Steppe winds, and soon a clear fire of silver-birch logs was making ready our supper.

It was the stillest world conceivable; and yet that black land which rolled, without hedge or stake for tenantless leagues, hard against the sky, almost bubbles, year by year, in the spring with life.

While the snow, which scars the light earth in melting as though it had been lashed with a whip, is still lying fathom deep in the clefts of the valleys, the dark upland grows green, one morning as though it had been carpeted with silk. A month after, the grass is knee-deep, with here and there a flash of scarlet or spike of purple blossom. Then suddenly, after perhaps a drenching night, the wide, green sea is hidden under a sheet of bewildering color — carmine and crimson, azure, amethyst, indigo, and every glitter of burnished gold. It is as though it had rained flowers. There is nothing in the world to equal it in suddenness of fierce and dazzling splendors. But the sun burns and bleaches all in a month, the grass turns grey, the corn ripens and falls on the scythe; and there remains only the black waste of a pathless upland, which hides even the green hollows of its treasured woods.



As we sat about the fire, while there was still some rose-light westward above the wonderful purple distances which the black earth seems to deepen, one needed a Russian word to express the silence — a silence which *pressed*. Far away, looming weird and large against the sky, one could discern at times some train of ox-drawn wagons, slowly working our way, as one sees the laboring ships at sea. For from all sides the country was draining inwards to the fair. One could hear the creaking of the carved yokes a mile off, or the thin, dry scrape of a wheel. Then these travellers also encamped; one saw the little spirt of their fire, and lost the faint sounds of their march.

The stillness was absolute, and one heard the feathers of the geese going home overhead to their distant village, and made out the white angle of their flight against the sky, as they rose above the wood.

Once a string of swans passed us, flying south from the winter; we were camped beside water, and the sudden rush of their wings and bodies on the smooth surface came like an inroad of spirits from the ebbing night, and was, for the instant, very ghostly.

As twilight faded the sharp bark of a fox, or the wild phoi, phoi! of the bustard came to us from the wood, and once an owl stretched a long, melancholy note, which seemed to hang in the air as the smoke of steamboats in a calm. My companion turned sleepily towards me, and murmured, "So he hoots for the snow." But he hooted too soon. We lay by the fire in our *shoobas*, or sheepskin coats, when the nights were still, or burrowed from the wind in the straw of the cradle-like carts. The silver birch makes an ideal fire, the round stems burning into bars of living gold, that smoulder without flame and crumble at a touch. Waking one night when the fire was spent, and kicking the outside logs into a buzz of sparks, I heard the scud of padded feet behind my head, and saw the lean length of a craven wolf slink from sudden redness to a grey shadow under the moon. He must have come over the wold, for the cattle had not smelt him.

Sometimes, half asleep, with one's ears to the ground, the passing of a flock of sheep could be heard a mile off, as they dragged at weeds that had withered in the corn.

Once I saw them moving, a dim whiteness, across the hillside, and their shepherd, a melancholy figure before them;

the sound of their teeth and trotters was like the innumerable lapping of a running tide against the stream, and the shepherd gave forth now and again a wild, low wail, to which they ran.

It was a strange, solitary sojourn, those wakeful nights on the black Steppe, with voices, and shadows, and shapes that passed as shades, beasts, and night birds and men.

We entered Malouga at daybreak, when the gilded cupolas floated like golden bubbles upon the mist which hid the house roofs. A wide, flat river swept in a great, encircling bend about it, with an effect of tenderness. On that morning it lay like a soft, white scarf tied round the walls, so deeply buried were its waters in the fog. The badgers ran to their holes from the sound of our groaning wheels, as the oxen toiled up the long hill above the town, and disappeared with a snap over the chalky circles cast up about their burrows on the black loam. Two eagles went wheeling round each other high into the grey air, where the first flash of sunrise turned them into puffs of golden smoke before it touched the world. We watched a fox stealthily stalking a drove of geese across the hillside, till we could only tell his movements by the switching of his brush; but we forgot him as the low, strange roar of many thousand oxen blew faintly over us from the fair with the breaking mist.

We could see them now; a red, moving floor of hides, round which a man could have walked in circuit of many miles, and strode across in any direction upon their crowded backs. The perpetual dull moaning roar, as of one pent beast and not a hundred thousand, and the continual waver of reddish shadow across that vast moat of life was very impressive. Further on were the horses, the little rat-like horses of southern Russia, almost equaling the cattle in number, but still somewhat hid from us by the mist.

The green roofs of the town, many though they were and straggling, seemed dwarfed by that red flood of living things damped round about them.

We entered the fair at daybreak, we left it before nightfall three days later, but, though not unacquainted with the low levels of humanity in many quarters of the world, the disclosures of those few hours passed, in display of concentrated unconcerned debasement, the most befouled divinity in fallen men that I had ever met. It was not the grossness which appalled; many a spotless shirt-front covers

as much of that as the dirtiest *shooba*, but its shamelessness. A tithe of it could not be mentioned in English without equalling almost the offence of the deed, and, could it, perhaps not one half would be believed.

One saw things, doubtless, at their worst. Renan has perhaps exaggerated the excesses of despair, and even the natural man's morality is not exactly proportioned to his hold on life; but he often sins at a gulp as he would not with time for drinking. But one felt that mere circumstance could not be made responsible for all one saw; it was too easy, too foreseen.

But there was often something pictorial—an untied lace of the picturesque, as it were—in the grossest scenes, and something not disconsolate in the saddest. Famine as yet had only blanched and not pinched the cheek. Later it dragged its victims down to the level of the special correspondent, but at that time it had only a hand on their arm.

One scene I remember, a type of many. A merchant, no Jew, but brother Russian, chaffering for the sale of the family's last cow. It had eaten the dried grass of the Steppe, after that, threshed straw, at last, the salted roof of its own shed. Now there was no more fodder, its milk had ceased, its skin bellied from bone to bone. Two little boys played with its muddled tail; a baby, milkless, cried from the wagon; the father, his face flaccid with Russian dulness, feigned or felt, leant between the shafts, slowly losing his price; doggedly callous to the future.

The mother stood against a wheel, erect, her arms folded, her mouth fixed, her dark eyes staring with terrible anguish and despair. A sight of them made one curse that northern Shylock, buying, excellent economist, in the cheapest market, the market of human trouble. His cow cost him but a few pence and some drugged spirit; it cost them, perhaps, their three children. They were "thrown in" as it were, to the bargain. Yet it was but one scene from many. "Man's necessity," says the proverb "is God's opportunity;" it is the devil's too, and in that fair he took very often the form of a sleek merchant.

Everywhere was bargaining; the cries of sellers, the slap of fists in the palm, the plucking-off of caps. There is no more vehement auctioneer of his own goods than the Russian peasant.

He commences with complete indifference, throws out his price, an exorbitant one, as the sower a handful of grain; there

it is, sprout or fail, none of his affair. As you turn from him, he halves it with equal unconcern; then as you face about and halve it again the bargain begins. His dulness melts, he waves his arms, clutches at his clothes, grasps your shoulder, strikes vehemently his open hand, plucks his *shapka* from his head, sometimes flings it aggressively to the ground, often snatches at yours. A stranger would always be struck by this perpetual doffing of the cap, and the tragic air with which it is replaced. Through a tempest of words and gestures the cap comes with an effect of sudden calm; the seller glares upon it with a kind of impartial admiration mixed with wonder at his own moderation; the buyer eyes it askance with considerable distrust. If he lifts his own the bargain is concluded; otherwise he shakes his head, the cap goes back regretfully, the haggling recommences. The act is more than mere gesture, it is an appeal. It invokes the witness of a divine arbitrator, who is, in theory, overhead, at no great distance. The invocation, though pretty frequently repeated at varying or vanishing prices, never seems to lose its sanctity. The Almighty may be presumed to lend himself to the exigencies of commerce.

This particular piety is more pleasing and somewhat more convincing on other occasions. The Russian always eats uncovered, and the act had often a pathetic acceptance in those lean days.

At evening when the fair breathed quietly in a red air of dust, and the first star floated, a pale violet, in the tinted heaven, the evening meal was spread beside the wagons—shining samovar, perhaps a little white cloth, black bread, red wedges of melon—not a fine repast, but the men lifted their caps to it as though it had been laid by God. That was one side of the picture, the other was to be seen in the wine-tents; it was not so pretty, in fact, it was at times exceeding foul. Strong drink is a great revealer, a great discriminator; it divides the man from the mould, and every nation should be studied drunk as well as sober. Perhaps, one should say, the Russian should be studied sober as well as drunk. The study had its own regrettable humor. A Cossack, I remember, who had succeeded in getting clear of the fair, very full of vodka and nodding over his little horse like a leaf, caught, as he lurched, his left spur in the rein, and so constrained, spent the day trotting round the foot of the hill in a dusty circle.

He seemed to have hazy ideas as to the

number of animals he was astride, and his efforts to chastise them all were very quaint. How he held on is a mystery known only to Cossacks and Kirghese, who ride better, I believe, drunk than sober. By evening the nag was still going, but his rider was asleep; so we freed the beast's mouth, and sent him on his way. He wandered off sorrowfully, as though, like the scapegoat, ashamed of his sinful burden. Another burden as sinfully comic I saw the next day in a cart. It was a *dolgooshka*, and the two brothers who owned it and had brought it there for sale, having buried care and consciousness in a tumbler of brandy, were laid out, head to heel, upon it, with a cord across their backs.

A friend was showing off the paces of the pony, and the two limp bodies behind him jumped with the jolting wheels, and sprayed their arms about like marionettes. The moral was pictorially obtrusive, but so was the comedy; one could not sigh for laughter.

The town priest was very frequently to be seen about the fair; there was occupation for him, but I think he was otherwise employed. He wore a spiritual smile of benign toleration, which broadened towards evening, and became uncertain of itself at the corners; it began too, about that hour, to have an odor. He was reported to exercise, amongst other priestly functions, the somewhat archaic *droit de culage*, but though ready, after some knowledge of these village fathers, to admit the strangest lapses in conduct, such a statement makes too large a demand upon what one knows of their courage.

A camp of gipsies clung to one flank of the fair. They lived in peaked, brightly-colored tents, and a good deal of dirt. The small children ran out about one's feet on all-fours like beasts, naked, but for a wisp of flaming rag round their waists. The women seemed always preparing for a meal; the men slept. One wondered why they were there at all.

"Come at night," said my friend, the cowherd, who had known unregenerate days. I came, stumbling over tent-ropes among the little horses, not much helped by the yellow mist round a few paper lanterns; but what I saw must remain untold. Even in Latin, a language consecrated to such descriptions, it would seem too shameless; one wandered back to the bestialities of the fair and into its choking dust with a sense of recovered purity.

Within its limits, night seemed to have

come more suddenly, for children were lying quietly asleep in the shadow of the crowded booths, or curled in the straw of the wagons. From some *kabak* came a jangling dance on the *balalaika*, and a swirl of drunken voices. A cock crew, and dogs far away began barking, the sound dying out across the town, or being drowned in the constant incommunicable moaning from the flood of cattle. A woman's shrill scream of laughter pierced into the night, followed by a man's gruff restraint; then a clatter of tongues, another skirl of unwholesome merriment, and silence. The mares began to neigh, there was a dampness in the floating dust, and the thin moon rose, red and old, above the hill.

As we passed a booth, through whose canvas a dull light drained, there was a sudden uproar, a yell, and a man burst from the doorway with blood dripping from his face, staggered, and fell in the dust. No one followed, and one could only turn him on his back to save his drunken mouth from smothering, leaving the dust as an effective plaister on his wounds, and pass on.

As the moon rose, the faint yellow of the tent-peaks turned to grey, and a ripple of red and silver broke over the moaning darkness where the cattle were penned. The light colored even the dusty air, so that we seemed to be living in a silken web.

We sat talking in our cradle-like *vos* until the human sounds had died out, one by one, into silence, and the east grown white. The mists were tangled then in twisted vapors to a thick veil, and covered all that tainted human sty with equal tenderness and beauty, drawing a sheet across its face.

The day which followed was our last in the fair, and we passed out from its choking haze at evening to the cool freshness of the empty hills. The wide, low river (the piers of its wooden bridges strangely bastioned to split the breaking ice) glowed with the rosy light above it, like some window to the under world; the east was purple above the black wold, confessing a star, but a cloud of hot dust still hung in a red mask over that market-place of beasts and men, like the veil on a harlot's face.

The fair marked, as has been said, the change from straitness to starvation. It was to have proved the salvation of the poorest; they came indeed to sell their last cow, but that would bring them bread for the winter. Unhappily the necessity

was universal, and half the kine at the fair only lived to reach it by eating the thatch off their own sheds. They must be sold or slain; and sold they were at prices which meant despair. Horses were parted with for a few pence; I saw the sale of a dozen sturdy little Steppe ponies at the price of as many oysters, and cows, in milk, fetched no more than the worth of their hides.

Leaving the cattle carts, I rode back with a breeder of horses who had just bought some three hundred beasts. Our quicker pace, despite some dispersions of the drove, took us past the long, slow lines of bullock wagons, spreading homeward hopelessly. It was the saddest sight; even the laboring cattle seemed to have in their eyes the fixed glaze of despair. The men hung limp and dejected in the carts, or tramped beside the cattle, staring fiercely, and too sour to lift their caps with the universal Russian suavity and soft phrase of greeting. They were driving Death home behind them, and they knew it.

It was curious, some weeks later, returning to the great cities, from scenes almost too terrible to record — whole villages shrunken to skin and bone, and burnt out with typhus and famine fever — to find one's witness met with absolute apathy, and even suspicion. A man here and there knew what was coming, and prepared to meet it, but the most turned their heads the other way. The journals were forbidden to mention the distress; euphemisms were provided for their use in exceptional cases, though the prices quoted in their columns needed no commentary. The doctors were warned that deaths from starvation must be unknown in so well-regulated an empire, and signed the burial orders according. "Deceased succumbed to a pain in his stomach," was a specimen of their melancholy humor over one poor creature, of whom, indeed, it was true, for he had made experiment of nothing else there for many days.

Even in those late autumn weeks the people of the upper Steppe had begun to move to and fro like troubled water; since then they have overflowed. The towns have been deluged with starvelings who had eaten the dung of their own cattle before abandoning their homes. From all sides came the same tale of inhuman villainies, of adulteration and rapacity. Seed-corn sent from the Caucasus to a certain district was delivered ground, and mixed with forty per cent. of gypsum. The "special" bread made by a St.

Petersburg firm was refused by hungry dogs, and stank even when fresh.

Yet the people ate it. This poor, patient, humble, homeless people, whose god, protected by the police, rules them through the barred windows of his palace; they eat it and die. Revolution is a sad thing, but such endurance is almost sadder; it is no measure of fortitude, it is the numbness of the dead.

FRANCIS PREVOST.

From Longman's Magazine.

#### REMINISCENCES OF ST. PETERSBURG SOCIETY.

BY LADY EASTLAKE.

It was towards the end of April, 1844, that, after a favorable voyage from Lübeck, I found myself approaching the port and fortress of Cronstadt. The season was unusually early. We had, it is true, dodged a good deal of ice in the Baltic, but the indefinable sense of spring was in the air, and no fear was entertained of any return of frost. I was accompanied by an elderly woman — an old family servant — Anderson by name, who would have gone with me to the end of the world, and was the most upright and plain-spoken of her class. She acted as maid, and also, unconsciously, a little as chaperon. We stood together on the deck as we neared the island, which is so low, and its fortifications so heavy, that the captain of our vessel had impressed me with the conviction that a general discharge of her guns would sink her. Morally speaking, the fortress of Cronstadt, strong, ugly, and overbearing in look, is a typical frontispiece to a land of despotism and oppression. Our luggage, meanwhile, was piled on the deck, our hand-bags and baskets being also taken from us; all, large or small, being tied together with a kind of dirty tape with its ends lead-sealed, a sentinel paced over it, and at last, with ourselves, transferred to the deck of a small steamer bound for St. Petersburg; the Neva, which we now entered, being too shallow to admit an ordinary sized vessel. The passage against the stream was slow, taking between three and four hours. Among the passengers was a poor German woman with a baby; and after an hour or two baby became hungry, and signified the fact in audible tones. The mother rose and walked to the pile of luggage, on which, lead-sealed like the rest, lay a homely basket with the neck of a bottle containing milk protrud-

ing from it. She stretched out her one free arm to take it, but in a moment a strong hand seized hers, and so roughly that it was a wonder the bottle was not broken. Baby was old enough to know what a bottle meant, and now roared louder than before. Both Anderson and I were on our feet in a moment. "Why, goodness gracious me!" said my honest soul, "they are not going to starve that baby! Did I ever!" Still that rough, strong hand held the bottle, as if in a vice. "*Tamoshna*" (contraband) was the only answer to the poor mother's appeal. I had observed the man eyeing the baby with suspicion, evidently thinking it some contrivance for cheating the custom house. At this moment a quiet French gentleman, one of our fellow passengers, stepped forward and put something into the fellow's ready hand, saying, as he returned to his seat, "*Avec cette canaille il faut parler rouble*"—a proverb in Russia. By this time the bottle was at baby's thirsty lips.

The banks of the Neva, hardly higher than the swamps on each side, were not inviting in any sense. The man who disdained all considerations of fitness in choosing the site of his capital was not likely to trouble his mind with considerations of the picturesque. Peter was a strange hybrid between barbarism and surface-civilization. He cared for the mechanical arts of life, not for its humanities or decencies, and his subjects knew as little of the one as of the other. The Baltic would seem to have been a nursery for royal monstrosities. We have only to think of Christina of Sweden, of Charles XII., and of Peter. The two first-named were decidedly mad, but the last only so far so as all despots inevitably become. History has granted him an energy, which never rested, but its aims were as often useless or pernicious, and carried out with the total denial of that first law of civilization—respect for human life. The man can hardly be called "Great" who chose the position of Petersburg without reference to convenience, health, or commerce—to wit, the shallowness of the river, which is the only highway to her. To the foundations alone the lives of above one hundred thousand poor, nameless fellow-creatures were sacrificed, and no conditions of the dearest-bought luxury that the modern world has seen have yet glossed over the stupendous stupidity of that mistake; the more stupid still when we know that the little town of Reval, which lies about three hundred miles to the south, has an admirable harbor,

between which and America a merchant vessel may come and go twice in the open season, whilst between America and Petersburg it can only go once.

Petersburg is so sunk in those waters which periodically inundate her, and which await only the concurrence of three causes—high tide, west wind, and ice passage—to demolish her, that we had hardly a sign of her existence till we found ourselves abreast of the English Quay and within the jaws of the custom house. I will not trouble the reader with an account of our slow and crooked passage through that form of Russian administration. Here there was also no other alternative than to "speak rouble," and that much oftener than I liked. More than once also I had to pacify my Anderson's honest indignation at the proceedings of a surly brute, with very dirty hands, who plunged them into my bags and boxes, tearing out their sacred contents helter skelter on to the grimy floor. She had very hazy ideas of what the words "contraband" and "duty" had to do with my wardrobe. His disrespect for a particular dress which he hauled out by main force was too much for her. "Put that down this minute, sir! My young lady's dresses is no business of yours. I wonder what you will do next; and your hands so filthy too!" A hearty laugh did me good, and many such did Anderson give me on that journey. In due time the tedious operation came to an end, and the hungry and weary travellers found rest and refreshment in Mrs. Wilson's *pension*, then the only English refuge in Petersburg. After the expiration of a week I was bound to hospitable Russian friends, at their hotel on the Fontanka Canal, who had kindly engaged to introduce me to the society, *par excellence*, of the capital. Meanwhile I drove about with Anderson and with an intelligent *laquais de place*, and saw the chief streets and buildings. By this time, however, most people have heard of the wooden pavements of the Nevski Prospect, now no longer novel, of the gilt spire of the fortress, of the many-domed churches, of the droschkies and of their bearded and caftaned drivers, and of the brow-beaten and miserable-looking soldiery. But the feature that stands out prominent before all is the character, already alluded to, of the founder, which still continues to impress itself on the city. The ambition of the Russian is evidently concentrated on *tours de force*, represented by feats of size and difficulty. He must have the largest cathedral, the Isaac's



Church; the longest façade, the Cadetten Corps; the tallest column, the Alexander Säule; and, if possible, he must have them all of one piece. The flight of steps up to the Isaac's Church are one enormous block of granite. The base and pedestal of the Alexander column, twenty-five feet high, another. This column, erected by Nicholas to his brother Alexander, is not without its peculiarly Russian moral. The emperor ordered the excavation of a shaft of granite of eighty feet long, believed to be the utmost length that could be found. The order was peremptory; and a monolith of no less than ninety-eight feet was discovered. But under a despotism it is safer to obey another than to think for oneself. Slaves go by the letter. Accordingly, to Nicholas's exasperation, his orders were strictly carried out and the superfluous eighteen feet cut off. This was "Es muss" in the wrong direction!

By this time my Russian friends had returned to Petersburg, and I was admitted into a sphere seldom so graciously thrown open to a foreign guest. In Russia the favor of the sovereign is the sole rule of precedence, and in virtue of that my kind host, Count B—, was "even as Pharaoh in the land." Fortunate was it for his fellow-subjects that he was so, for he was not only just and good, but absolutely discreet; without which all his goodness would have availed little. And fortunate also was it for Nicholas that he involuntarily submitted to his influence. It was no question of Greek meeting Greek. It was rather the ascendancy of what the impatient and impetuous despot most needed. The secret was that Count B— stood in no awe of his tremendous master, and that his gentle and humane character moved freely even within the circle of that irascible temper and iron will. It was rather Nicholas who stood in awe of the man who never flattered him, who could even, when needful, contradict him, and who he knew would only speak the truth, however courteously, sometimes diplomatically, but always firmly. With every imaginable post centring in him—from high military command, and command of the gendarmerie, and that of the secret police, to censor of the theatres—there was endless business to transact, and Count B— was with his imperial master every morning by ten o'clock, and dined with him once a week at four.

Of course no allusion to politics was ever heard in Count B—'s house. The thing and the word were alike tabooed.

On the other hand, I could not fail in that house to hear all the good that could be said of the sovereign—of his courage, as in the military insurrection that preceded his advent to the throne; of his desire to do right according to his light; of his readiness in an emergency. One anecdote struck me much. When the Winter Palace was on fire, he was in all parts of it, advising, encouraging, and directing; and much valuable property was saved by his personal help. On entering a large saloon, already full of smoke, he saw that several workmen were dangerously engaged in laboring to detach a splendid mirror. He snatched a heavy implement, and dashing it against the glass shivered it to pieces, then told the men to escape, and was the last himself to leave. It will be believed that I was anxious to see this man of endless *emportements* and terrible mistakes, but of somewhat heroic mould, and described by all as "le plus bel homme de son temps." There was even less reserve in speaking of the empress—sister of the old Emperor William of Germany—to whom many of the emperor's faults were ascribed. He was then, at forty-two, in the full vigor of life; she was forty, with only two pursuits, pleasure and dress. The first of the two had already left her a palsied old woman; the last never left her. No longer able to enjoy what had become her chief enjoyment, she was summarily described to me as "*la femme la plus malheureuse de l'empire.*" Of the two august personages, I was destined to see her first, and that strictly in character. Prince P—, *par excellence le Ministre de la Cour*, and the special keeper of the empress's person and jewels, had boxes at all the theatres either opposite or next to the imperial box. These were placed at Count B—'s disposition, and at the first theatre to which I was taken I found myself, but for the interposition of a slender gilt column, seated next the empress. Her Majesty was by no means a tranquil neighbor. She fidgeted incessantly, beat what is called "the devil's tattoo," and restlessly examined her rings and bracelets, which blazed with diamonds. I knew from report that she was cased in flannel over which was a splendid evening dress. I witnessed now what might be called a change of scene, which I fancy was unique in the annals of modern royalty. A large withdrawing-room was behind the imperial box, in which I could see several female attendants and some large band-boxes. Without turning my head offensively in her Majesty's direction, I saw

that Taglioni, who was dancing her best in a piece called "L'Ombre," was not engaging her attention, which seemed to be as closely riveted on the sleeve of her dress, as if she had never seen sumptuous pink satin before. She now rose suddenly, but restlessly, as if the moment for some important decision had come, and withdrew to what evidently served as her *chambre de toilette*. In due time the imperial lady emerged to the view of her subjects still more gorgeously arrayed than before—a change which extended even to her bracelets, for, as her attenuated arm rested on the narrow partition which divided us, I saw that fresh splendors had replaced those I had observed before. So sudden and unforeseen were her Majesty's decisions that Prince P——, whom I have mentioned as the State guardian of her person and jewels, sometimes suffered considerable embarrassment as to how to fulfil his duties. A story was current in Petersburg of an instance in kind. The empress had set her heart on visiting a small bathing-place not far from Munich, called Tegern See, famed for the strengthening virtues of its air and water. Tegern See was not precisely the place in which to wear diamonds. Still, Prince P—— was well aware that her own enormous private collection would accompany her, but he was unprepared to hear her announce her intention of taking the crown diamonds as well. To oppose her Majesty was out of the question. Petersburg is famous for the best setters of jewellery, and secret-service money is without stint; he therefore evaded the difficulty by ordering a complete fac-simile set in *paste*. His Highness prided himself on this stroke of policy. The secret was only kept from those two personages to whom no one could tell it, but all *la haute volée* enjoyed it cordially.

Hitherto I had not seen the emperor except like a passing vision as he dashed along the Nevski Prospect with streaming plumes in a one-horse sledge; or it might be at the opposite box in the theatre, where all scrutiny of the imperial family through a *lorgnette* was forbidden. But there were still two masked balls due before the season closed, and that was a stage on which he was sure to appear. For though the empress had perforce relinquished a form of excitement her health no longer permitted, her consort, strange to say, seemed to have the more eagerly taken it up. I was now initiated into the mysteries of these amusements, which were curiously calculated to attract the idle

and thoughtless women of a vicious capital. In one sense they might be regarded as a species of rehearsal of female emancipation. The tables were turned, and that in a way which gave the amusement peculiar piquancy, for the ladies alone were masked. No lord of the creation presumed to assume the incognito, and that from no chivalrous or gallant motive, but from reasons of a far more peremptory kind. No soldier is allowed, whatsoever the motive, to throw off his uniform, except for his dressing-gown; and as in Russian society nine men out of ten are military, it had become the rule for all alike to go unmasked. Thus the weaker sex found itself for once in possession of the field. Under these circumstances our readers can readily fill up the programme. A mask represents the essence of the clandestine, and to *intriguer* or mystify whom they pleased, from the emperor downwards, and that with impunity, was a temptation which few young and giddy women (to say no worse) could resist.

That I should witness this scene, which I could only do by taking part in it, was a matter of course; and a plan was proposed which it was thought would give it greater zest. A relative of my excellent hostess was of the same rather unusual height as myself. With the intuition of genius this lady saw the tempting complications sure to ensue on our going dressed so strictly alike as not to be distinguished. No plan could be more easily carried out; the same domino (a kind of short, black silk cloak) trimmed with the same pink quilling; the same mask, leaving slits for the eyes, and terminating with a border of black silk over the mouth—*voilà tout*. I must own that it did occur to me that there might be some indiscretion—not to say imprudence—involved in this scheme. But that it was not quite fair to engage a young and inexperienced English guest in it did not enter my head, nor, I am sure, the heads of those kind friends who promoted it. It was simply a plan for me to witness a fashionable form of amusement, and, above all, to see and to *intriguer* the emperor, which my kind friends insisted on my doing, and in which they paid me the compliment to think I should be successful. I was a little surprised by the preparations made to insure our incognito. The lady to whom I was to serve as double would not use her own carriage and servants, but engaged both new, and under a feigned name, for the occasion. It was difficult to explain to my good Anderson the sort of amusement on which I was

bound; a ball she could understand, but why I should go in such a queer, dowdy dress she could not comprehend. The mask was the crucial puzzle. Why should I cover up my face? I need not be ashamed of it—she wasn't. Besides, nobody would know me. "But you will take it off when you get there, won't you?" The evening came, and two figures, each the exact repetition of the other, stood side by side before a great cheval glass. The effect was more than startling, it was absolutely weird. I did not know which was myself. Anderson came in and shrank back. "Gracious goodness me! which is you, ma'am? I can't for my life tell." I saw she was struggling with emotion. I put out my hand, and the wring she gave it showed the anxiety of the faithful heart. There was something in the whole proceeding which jarred upon her; it was not open and true, and she was always the soul of both. "I wish I was going with you," she said, with emotion, and so perhaps did I.

We reached a huge building—I forget in what part of Petersburg—passed through a fine suite of rooms, and entered what is called, in foreign priggery, the *Salle de Noblesse*—the superbest *salle* in Europe—encircled by a piazza of marble columns, and leading by marble steps at six different places down to the ball-room. Round the piazza, up and down the steps, and in the *salle*, were thronging no less than twenty-seven hundred people; the smaller—feminine—half masked like myself. It required some nerve to plunge into this crowd. I clung to my companion, but the care of me was no part of her programme. She cast me off pitilessly, telling me there would be no fun if we were seen together, gave me the agreed *consigne*—pointed out a column where we should meet on leaving, and cautioned me that if, by accident, we were thrown together, I should instantly seek some seat, so as to conceal our similarity. She then plunged into the giddy vortex, and I just saw her hook her arm into that of a gentleman. A seat was within sight, and I made my way to it; but, however near, it was not easy to reach. I seemed to run the gauntlet through a file of gentlemen; being intercepted by signs, taps, shakes of the hand, and offers of the arm; but once seated it was the rule to leave a mask in comparative peace. Here, therefore, I rested and surveyed the strange scene. The men, most of them, had masked women on their arms—some serious and dull, others whispering and giggling—

the superfluous men, not so flatteringly chosen, grouping round a couple here and there, who talked loud and promised amusement. Suddenly the crowd fell back, and a tall figure appeared encompassed by a circle which moved with him, but kept at the same distance, as if spell-bound. I saw at once it was the emperor. He had evidently just entered, and bent his steps close to me. I had time to observe him, and did so carefully. A finer specimen of male humanity it was impossible to see. Tall, grandly developed, and on a colossal scale, he towered above all. His head was strictly Grecian, with forehead and nose in one grand line, chin and jawbone strongly pronounced; his eyes large and blue, with an expression of calmness, dignity, and coldness, which awed every one; his mouth smiled, his eyes never. He stood still, as if waiting to be attacked. Then two masks came up; one of them evidently asked for his hand, and he gave one to each. Then their courage seemed to fail, and both retreated, the one pulling the other. He evidently remonstrated, and said a few words which I did not catch. He was soon assailed again. A little mask came up, and, snatching his grand arm familiarly, carried him off into the receding crowd. I watched that tall figure as long as my eyes could follow it. It is not *bon genre* to disturb a mask when in possession of a gentleman's arm; it is for her to send him about his business when she is tired of him. When I next caught sight of that magnificent figure the little woman had abdicated, and the arm which wielded the destinies of above ninety millions was engrossed by a much taller figure. There was no mistaking the present incumbent; it was my double! Of course I watched them, and but for her prohibition should have followed them. I could not make out whether the emperor was amused or not. Madame de S— was not famed for wit, nor even for its substitute, sauciness; she was talking rather emphatically; but Nicholas's expression was rather that of a man listening to a lecture. Losing sight of them, I now felt it time to join in the game myself.

The emperor's mania for these entertainments is extended, *nolens volens*, to his chief officers—old and young, grave and gay, all have to dance to the same tune. I soon recognized a poor man in gorgeous uniform whom I knew to be sinking under the weight of a domestic affliction which was the talk of Petersburg. He had lost, by scarlet fever, five children

out of six. He looked like a ghost (a ghost under the light of seventy-five enormous chandeliers), but did not venture to be absent. I went to him and took his arm. This, my first initiation into the mysteries of "intriguing," was out of rule. And yet not quite so; for it will readily be believed that though most people enter these walls with light hearts and lighter purposes, yet that some are there on anxious errands. It is so needful to let the czar or his chief functionaries know facts which cannot otherwise be conveyed to them, that this disguise is assumed to plead either the innocence or the extenuating circumstances of some loved and long-imprisoned one, and is known to have been so done with success. Happily, poor Baron S——'s sorrow could be assuaged by no earthly despot. He looked mournfully at me, and only said, "Vous me faites trop d'honneur, madame; vous me trouverez un très triste compagnon." At all events he found me a sympathizing one, for I ventured to speak from my heart's abundance, and after a few earnest words we parted with a warm shake of the hand. He ought to have recognized me, for we had met before, but the sad preoccupation of his thoughts interposed a more effective barrier than even my mask. How my good Russian friends would have quizzed me for going to a masquerade to console a poor man for the loss of his children; so I kept that episode to myself.

It was now time for me to act according to the rule of the place. At this moment I caught sight of a young Russian count, whom I had known at the Russian Embassy in London. I took his arm, evidently to his astonishment, and soon intrigued him almost out of his senses by reminding him of a certain ball at a certain house, and of a certain duel which ensued from it, which astonished him still more. Having thus reduced him to a state of impotent wonder, and knowing him to be vain of his person, I cruelly informed him that he was both *enlaidi* and *engraissé*, which was but too true. By this time an easy laugh against him was raised from a gathering circle. I advised him then to pick up some lady who knew less about him, and threw him off.

Meanwhile the confusion occasioned by two versions of apparently the same individual began to appear. It was like the old game of cross-questions and crooked answers, all *à tort et à travers*. Of course I kept up the imbroglia all in

my power; not always well pleased with the signs of the latitude my double evidently allowed herself in the way of assignments for the next ball, etc., etc. One instance of confusion was rather amusing. A little pert-looking young officer, with the Peobraschenky regiment uniform, came up. "Ah, madame! J'espère que vous m'avez pardonné; mais, vous savez, on parle la vérité dans un bal masqué et il faut avouer que vous avez le pied un peu gros." "Gros, monsieur?" (I prided myself a little on my feet) involuntarily holding up the impeached member, trimly clad in the black satin sandalled slipper of the time. "Gros, monsieur! Que voulez-vous?" He gazed astonished. "Mais, diable, vous aviez joliment emballé votre pied tout à l'heure." The laugh went round at the little man's expense, while I was pursued with "De grâce, madame, laissez-moi voir un peu;" "et moi, et moi," till I was out of hearing.

I now caught sight of my kind host, Count B——, and knowing that he inspired almost as much awe as his imperial master, I took his arm as a harbor of refuge. "I know you," he said. "Madame de S—— is in that division," pointing to a dense crowd at one of the doors. "Keep aloof from her. Have you *intrigué* the emperor?" "No, indeed not, I should be frightened to death." "No need for that, *chère dame*, you will find him as gentle as a lamb. And he likes tall women, although he has not a regiment of them, like Frederick the Great." "But Madame de S—— has attacked him already. I saw her on his arm." "All the more fun," he said, "you will mystify him the better. Promise me." I gave no promise.

The favorite vanity of Russians, that of speaking foreign languages, comes into play of course at a masked ball, as a means of discovering the nationality, and also to a certain degree the social position of the mask. I went through a regular catechism on that point more than once. "Par exemple, madame, vous parlez le français assez bien." "Aussi bien que vous, monsieur." "Ah! la petite impertinente! Mais gavarite li pa russki?" (parlez-vous le russe?) "Nemenoschko" (slightly). "Und sprechen Sie Deutsch auch?" "Ja wohl, und besser wie Sie." "Encore la petite impertinente. Et l'Italien?" "Sì, ma poco." "Et possiblement l'Espagnol?" "No mucho." "Ah! vous êtes une vraie polyglote. Mais l'Anglais?" "A leetic." "On voit que vous n'êtes pas fort dans l'Anglais. Tant

mieux pour vous, madame! Soyez contente; c'est le peuple le plus détestable au monde." This would have been too much for a saint. So I broke out: "No, sir, I beg your pardon; the best, the noblest, the wisest, the *freest*—you know what I mean—the *freest* in the world." My adversary stood speechless with astonishment, and a slight murmur, not of disapprobation, arose from the crowd collected round us as I turned away. Doubtless some spy—for these gentry are known to frequent masquerades, and to speak all languages—made a note for future use of a tall woman in a black domino, and with a small foot, who endeavored to incite the lieges against the government. This is a specimen of the *bêtises* which pass for wit. Many minutes had not elapsed before I was cross-questioned again, and again affected to disown my native tongue. When a grave-looking gentleman who stood by said: "Madame, I will tell you one thing: you may pretend not to speak English, but, *cependant*, you are an Englishwoman or *le diable*. You have betrayed yourself by your 'Oh non! Oh oui!' Only the English use the interjection 'oh' to everything. 'Oh! how nice!' 'Oh! how pretty!' I have unmasked you here." I could only ejaculate, as I was bound to do, "Oh, yes!" We both laughed heartily, which immediately attracted a crowd, glad of any crumbs of amusement in this dullest of all places; and while he related the story I made off, followed by vociferous repetitions of "Oh, yes," "Oh, no!" "Oh! how nice!" Just at this moment I encountered my double in the crowd, and immediately effaced myself by sinking on a seat; while she stalked on, and I saw my grave gentleman accost and hammer away at her, in English, of which she did not understand one word.

There is no place like a masquerade for convincing us of the important part played, in all social intercourse, by the human countenance. Without that title-page to the book within we run the risk either of reading amiss or of not reading at all. How dreadful it would be, for example, for all parties, if, with woman's prerogative of saying what she does not mean with one feature, she had not the equal facility of unsaying it with another! But under a mask, however articulate the voice, the face is dumb. Generally speaking, the lips can say but little that the eyes, if they so will, cannot contradict. But through the slits of the mask the eyes are unintelligible. Without the expression conveyed by the movement of the

lids and lashes they are but a patch, of which we hardly see the color, and which the oldest friend or most ardent lover would not recognize. This is why a masquerade of only women is for the most part deficient in go and repartee. The women may be divided under three heads—the shy, the bold, and the stupid. The shy say timid things; the bold, rude things; and the stupid say nothing at all. I sat by a good deal, and these were the fruits of my observation. Here and there a clever woman drew a crowd round her, or a couple of saucy, flirting minxes badgered and bantered a poor man mercilessly, and shot their little pertnesses at the bystanders, and were followed wherever they moved. Of course I watched Nicholas, and saw him accosted and dragged about, in humiliating fashion, by all three varieties. With the shy, who generally bore signs of good breeding, he was evidently courteous, and desirous to put them at their ease. With the bold he was evidently at *his* ease, and the freest relations were apparently quickly established between them. The stupid soon let go of his arm; while the saucy minxes—generally, I was told, some milliners' apprentices—who pulled him here and there at their caprice, were his favorite companions. Had I been a Russian this exhibition would have sorely tried my loyalty.

More than once I rose from my seat determined to try my chance with this impersonation of earthly power, but, after attempting to approach him two or three times, and always finding his back turned, I fancied that he really meant to avoid me, and gave up the idea. The evening had now worn away, and the time was approaching for the appointment with my double, when again Count B— came up with the same question, "Avez-vous intrigué l'empereur?" and on hearing my answer urged me to accost him at once. "Courage," he added; "vous lui plairez; je le connais—and don't hesitate to tell him you are an Englishwoman." "Do you keep near," I replied. We soon saw the tall figure, and I approached him, determined to be neither shy nor stupid, but feeling the strongest incarnation of both. He could not mistake my intention, nor I his scowl. "Je vous ai déjà dit, madame, que je suis fatigué." "Il se peut, sire," I ventured to say, "que vous vous êtes trompé." "Trompé? Non, je ne me trompe pas." I took refuge in the universal answer of an inferior. "Schlussus" (I obey). He darted a quick glance at me as, with a deep curtsy, I turned away



Count B—— was at hand. He had watched the little scene. "Ah! Je comprends; but you did all right." He said no more; and then added: "I have seen Madame de S—— and told her I would take you home; I am sure you must be tired. The next morning I was cross-questioned by my hostess and her daughters. Like the count, they all said, "Ah! Je comprends."

Meanwhile the count was as usual with the emperor by ten o'clock, and the subject of the ball of the preceding evening soon came up. "I saw your Majesty make a great mistake. That tall mask would have amused you, sire." "Amused me! Why, she bored me to death. C'est la personne la plus ennuyante au monde. I could hardly get rid of her." So then the count related the plot that had been concerted, and the emperor answered him, *avec grand empressement*, that he should be delighted to repair the mistake, and hoped I would give him the opportunity at the next and last ball of the season. I was assured by these kind friends that such an expression on his part (granting it to be true, of which I felt by no means sure) was no every-day occurrence, but the greatest compliment he could pay to a lady, and on this they warmly dwelt. Compliment to me personally it certainly was not, for, for aught he knew, I might be as *ennuyante* as Madame de S——, and not so amusing as the chits I had seen dragging him about. At all events, I had no intention of being put to the test. It was not for me, however, to wound the susceptibilities of my Russian friends on this rather ticklish point. I hope, therefore, that I succeeded in convincing them how deeply I was impressed with the imperial condescension, and not less with my determination that nothing in the whole world would induce me to enter a Petersburg masquerade again to amuse any one.

The night before, as my good Anderson had helped me to divest myself of my disguise, she had said in an appealing tone: "You will never go to that place again." I answered emphatically, "No, never."

AUTHOR OF "BALTIC LETTERS."

From The National Review.  
THE DUTCH PEASANTRY.

A BEING more conservative than the ordinary Dutch peasant can scarcely be found anywhere in Europe. This old-

fashioned person is not, as a rule, burdened with political theories. Yet he has an important share in local government. He is free from the noisy self-assertion of the newly fledged politician, and makes use of his rights simply as a matter of course. As village Councils constitute one of the topics of the day, it may interest the English reader to hear what manner of man the Dutch peasant is, and how he acts his part on the modest stage of village politics. It may be best to begin with a slight sketch of peasant life. What I shall have to say will refer mainly to the central provinces of South Holland and Utrecht, and, less directly, to those of Zealand (in the south) and Gelderland (in the east). In the other provinces the situation is, in many respects, widely different.

The majority of the farmers of south Holland and Utrecht are tenants. Many of the farms have been held by the same families for generations. The law of the sub-division of property (the same as in France) has not affected the peasantry as much as one would suppose. The son who, either as owner or as tenant, has the family farm for his share of the paternal inheritance gives an equivalent in money to his brothers and sisters, or else a share in the profits.

In the opinion of an expert, tenant-farmers are better off than peasant proprietors. The same authority considers that a small farm can be managed more profitably than a comparatively large one (leaving the very large ones out of the question). The small farmer has the capital necessary for working a farm of thirty hectares (twenty-two and one-half acres) with profit. Even twenty hectares is preferable to sixty. More land entails more working expenses than can be properly met.

The small farmer works on old-fashioned principles, and knows little of "scientific farming." He is inclined to be sceptical about modern improvements, and has a low opinion of the doctrines propounded by the black-coated theorists from the Agricultural College who lecture throughout the country. On the other hand, he is thoroughly hard-working and thrifty; his wife is no less so. He has none of the wants which usually accompany a higher culture. In fact, he lives much as the better-class laborer does. It is difficult for the outsider to realize the social gulf that yawns between them. For, although the gulf is sometimes crossed, as a rule, woe-betide the laborer who dares to aspire to the hand of a farmer's daughter,

or the farmer's son who would fetch his bride from the neighboring cottage. Yet, in outward appearance there is not much difference between them. They wear dresses of the same kind; only the close observer will detect that the farmer's Sunday coat is a trifle less shiny than that of the laborer, and that his wife's cap is of real lace, and her best apron a black silk one, while the humbler woman is content with imitation lace and a checked cotton apron. Both women claim no higher title than that of *vrouw* (the German *frau*, in Holland given only to women of the lower orders); the hands of both are red with honest labor, and in education and refinement they are quite on a par. As regards character, most people, I think, would give the palm to the laboring class. The farmer is too often consumed by the love of money, and, consequently, hard and grasping. The laborer is not tempted in the same way. He can seldom make money, and must be content with his wages. On his lower scale of the social ladder there are more opportunities for the interchange of friendly offices, which foster a spirit of kindness that raises and softens the character.

The manners of both classes are awkward, gruff, and unprepossessing. All that can be said in the people's favor is that they are free from servility and insincerity. This unattractive exterior often hides true respect and attachment. Simple and unsophisticated as they are, they still acknowledge the rule of a Mrs. Grundy, and obey her unwritten laws. For example, whilst the lower orders in the towns seldom wear mourning, the poorest laborer puts his family into black after a death. It is true that the dyeing-pot has something to do with this transformation of the family wardrobe.

The staple food of both classes is bread, cheese, vegetables, potatoes, and salted pork. The laborer fattens and kills one or two pigs every year; the farmer a few more, according to the size of his establishment. The farmer, usually, once a year cures the meat of one or two cows for his own use. The laborer grows his own vegetables in the small plot of ground that he always rents. The women of the family generally have the care of this; and, except in haymaking time, it is all the field labor that is usually done by them in the provinces of which we speak, in the greatest part of which the wages of a farm laborer are about 2s. or 2s. 6d. a day at ordinary times, and 3s. 4d. in haymaking. This is in the rich clay-soil districts. In other

parts of the country the rate of wages is much lower — about 1s. a day in the summer, and 8d. or 10d. in winter; but living is cheaper and rents are lower there. The women in these districts do more field work, much to the detriment of their homes and families.

Of course, there is a great difference between the farmhouse and the cottage. In the prosperous districts, however, both are models of order and cleanliness. There are two kinds of farmhouses — the new, which, seen from the front, resembles an ordinary dwelling-house in the country towns, and is gaudy with fresh paint and red tiles; and the old, with its gabled and thatched roof which time has mellowed into a fit subject for the painter's brush.

The old farmhouse usually consists of a kitchen, a large living-room, a cheese-room, a dairy, two small bedrooms in the garret and at the back (forming part of the main building), the big cow-stable with its huge loft, and a wide space in the middle, where threshing and winnowing are still done in primitive fashion. Hayricks with movable roofs on four poles, various barns or sheds, and an outside kitchen, called the "baking-house," where the rough work is done (food cooked for the cattle, etc.), surround the main building.

The "baking-house" is often used as living-room in summer, and is more cheerful than the solemn apartment into which the visitor is invariably ushered. A wide chimney lined with tiles stretches nearly across one side of this room; but the open fire on the hearth has long ago disappeared and given place to an ugly stove. Quaint brass fire-irons hang behind it, and on either side is an armchair, differing from its humbler brethren only in the possession of wooden arms. If there is a baby in the family it is likely to be reposing in a cradle with green baize curtains as near as possible to the fireplace, in defiance of all laws of health. Two or three large cupboards, sometimes handsomely carved, always kept well polished, stand against the whitewashed walls. One of them generally has glass doors in the upper part; and on its shelves the family china — often of great value — is exposed to view. Unfortunately, these heirlooms in old families have been largely bought up by enterprising Jews. Sometimes, however, sentiment has proved stronger than the love of money, and the farmer has not parted with his family possessions. In a corner of the room a chintz curtain, or sometimes a double door, shows where

the big press-bed is—an institution of pre-hygienic times which, to the peasant mind, has no inconveniences whatever. In the middle of the room a table stands on a carpet; and, as people take off their shoes at the door and go about in their thick woollen stockings, neither it nor the painted floor ever show signs of mud. Another table stands near one of the windows, of which there are two or three. The linen blinds so closely meet the spotless muslin curtains, which are drawn stiffly across the lower panes on two horizontal sticks, that a stray sunbeam can hardly make its way into the room, even if it has been able to struggle through the thick branches of the clipt lime-trees that adorn the front of the house. On one of the tables a tray stands, with a hospitable array of cups and saucers, teapot, etc., and is protected from the dust by a crochet or muslin cover. The huge family Bible, with its big brass clasps, has an honorable place, often on a stand by itself. Rough woodcuts or cheap prints, and a group of family photographs, which do not flatter the originals, are hung on the walls. The framed and glazed sampler, worked in wools by the farmer's wife in her young days, usually makes a *dessus de porte*. The alphabet is the principal part of this extraordinary work of art; but it bears various other figures, which, on patient investigation, appear to have some resemblance to certain birds and flowers.

The life which is led by the inmates of these unpretending dwellings is one of much work and little, if any, play. It is difficult to say whether the austerity of the greatest part of the community in Protestant districts is a result of the lamentable coarseness exhibited in the amusements of its gayer members on such occasions as the annual fair, or *kermis*, still held in some country towns, or whether the latter is a reaction against the former. It is a fact that both extremes are found among the peasantry, almost to the exclusion of more healthy views of this side of life.

The prose of this dull existence is often relieved by family affections. Some of the peasants, indeed, seem to be devoid of much feeling, and one is sometimes tempted to ask which are more important in their eyes—the cattle that bring in money, or the children that, at first, only bring expense.\* But pretty pictures of

bright domestic happiness, and, as their sad counterpart, instances of heart-rending grief after bereavement, are numerous enough to refute a general charge of callousness.

No class of people in whose lives religion holds so much place as it undoubtedly does in those of the Dutch peasantry is utterly commonplace and uninteresting. The Roman Catholics, who are a large minority, are generally strict in their religious observances; while the Protestants are distinguished by an intensely theological bias. It is, perhaps, the strongest point of contrast between them and the rest of the world that they are as eager about subtle points of divinity as men were two or three centuries ago. They often, in their intense earnestness and intolerance, remind one of Cromwell's Roundheads,\* or of the characters in Mrs. Beecher Stowe's New England stories.

Minds of this type are scarcely likely to be open to the various influences that are so busily at work elsewhere to make people restless and discontented. On the whole, the rural population is still in the happy condition (described by the English Catechism) of people who "learn and labor truly to get their own living, and to do their duty in that state of life into which it hath pleased God to call them." In by far the greatest part of the Netherlands there is not the faintest trace among the peasantry of that class hatred which a recent writer† in the *Nineteenth Century* notices in the "Hodge" of Berkshire. Social agitators cannot get a hearing among them. Only the other day we were told of a party of these mischievous busybodies being refused drink and expelled from the premises by the owner of a public house (a woman) not far from the Hague.

Still, a peaceful tendency to seek a higher place in the social scale is not quite absent in the country, especially among the aristocracy in the village (as Mrs. Batson calls them), the carpenter, the mason, the house-painter, and the village tradespeople. The daughters often think

\* Indeed, sir, it was a very heavy blow; but it is beginning to wear off!"

\* It appears to me that a Roundhead would have made much the same appeal to Scripture to justify an act of his as that of a Dutchman of the peasant class on a certain occasion. The worthy man, a head gardener, had scarcely laid to rest his first wife, a terrible shrew, whose voice was heard all day long from his master's house scolding her poor maidservant, when he came to announce his intention of shortly marrying again (this time a farmer's widow), adding: "Scripture says you may marry again, but says nothing about the time!"

† Hodge at Home. By Mrs. Stephen Batson. January 7, 1892.

\* A curious instance of short-lived grief in a bereaved person, very quaintly expressed, was given by a farmer when visited by a gentleman a few hours after the death of (I believe) his wife. On the gentleman condoling with him on his loss, the man answered:

themselves "too good" for domestic service and become schoolmistresses if they can qualify themselves.

This class tends to migrate to the towns. There is less work for them than there used to be in the country, since so many small gentlemen who used to live in or near the villages have gone to towns, attracted by educational and other advantages. Also, there used to be flourishing boarding-schools in many villages, and these have been swept away by the cheap higher schools established by government. Migration to towns has not yet taken very serious proportions; and the nucleus remains — the steady, industrious, conservative, loyal population, which is a source of strength and stability to the country.

The lot of the peasantry is certainly happier than that of the working-classes in the towns. At least, in the central provinces there is little poverty among them. Drunkenness, the cause of so much want in the towns, is comparatively rare in the country. By thrift and good management the laborer, especially if he have a capable wife, can get on fairly well. Instead of living from hand to mouth, he has his comfortable provisions of pork and potatoes, and, in winter, of salted vegetables, and firewood to fall back upon. Old age is the most trying time. It is seldom the laborer can make sufficient, if any, provision for the days of failing strength. Still, the growing practice of putting money into the Post-Office Savings Banks proves that there are those who lay by for an evil day. It is usual to belong to a burial fund, for it is considered a dire disgrace to be buried by the parish. The aged laborer gets regular outdoor relief from the parish. If he can live with a married son or daughter, his declining years may be very comfortable. Often, however, he is boarded by the parish at a stranger's house for a small sum. His lot depends on the character of its inmates, and it is often wretched. I knew a woman who was a martyr to rheumatism. The neighbors considered her sufferings to be a judgment for her cruel treatment of an old pauper who had been confided to her care.

It is necessary to repeat that all these remarks refer mainly to the central provinces. In the north, farming is on a larger scale. More use is made of machinery, and the farmers are better educated, and often very wealthy.

In Friesland, certain causes — such as the increasing number of absentee landlords — have produced great distress

among the laboring classes, especially in the peat districts. Indeed, that province has of late been frequently called "our Ireland." There is considerable emigration to America and elsewhere from this and the adjoining provinces. Social agitators have been busily at work, and have been successful in the endeavor to sow seeds of discontent and rebellion.

Several years of extraordinary prosperity (1876-85) were followed by a period of agricultural depression. The last two years have been more favorable, and a competent judge recently gave it as his opinion that farmers had at present little cause to indulge in grumbling.

It now remains to be seen how these people manage their local affairs. The country is divided into communities (French, *communes*); each town forms a single and separate commune. The size of the country communes is unequal. Sometimes two or three villages, if near each other, form one of these parishes; more often each village is the centre of a parish. The head of the parish is the burgomaster (mayor), who is named by the crown, but draws his salary from the village budget. He is often a resident country gentleman, who is glad of the additional influence and authority which the office bestows. Sometimes a superior farmer fills it. The post is much coveted by not over-ambitious university men with some private means, who are satisfied with a modest but not unimportant sphere of action. It is sometimes a stepping-stone to a seat in the Provincial States or in Parliament.

The burgomaster presides over the town or village Council, but has no vote unless he be elected a member of that body. The electors are all the male inhabitants who pay a certain share in the taxes. The sum that gives one a right to vote for the Council is lower than that required for the Provincial States and for Parliament.

Members of the Council (who number from seven to thirty-nine, according to population) are elected for six years. Every second year there is an election for a third part. They are unpaid; but the Council has the option of giving "presence money" for each sitting. The Council meets at least six times a year. The executive power is vested in the burgomaster and two or more *wethouders* (French *députés*), chosen from the members. The latter office is paid, and is no sinecure in large places.

Within certain limits the autonomy of the parishes is very real. Some decisions

of the Council, however, must be submitted to the approval of the States Deputies, a permanent committee of the Provincial States (which can be compared with the Queen's Council), presided over by the queen's commissary, or governor, who is appointed by the crown. The village Council may appeal from the States to the crown.

The Council names all parish officials, such as the *regevenur* (tax-gatherer), the secretary, the schoolmaster. The burgo-master is the head of the police (except in large towns). The Council has the power of making police regulations. It fixes the yearly budget and raises local taxes. Its income is derived from two sources: a certain percentage on the general government taxes (on houses, servants, horses, etc.); and a kind of income tax, the amount of which, within certain prescribed limits, it has the power of fixing.

The village Council is generally composed of the leading men of the place; sometimes one or two country gentlemen, a few of the principal farmers, a head gardener, a well-to-do tradesman. The subtle line of demarcation that divides the laboring class from the higher peasantry is apparent here. A mere laborer seldom has a seat in the Council.

The system which has lasted since 1853 was partly a continuation of long-established municipal rights. In its present democratic form it is a result of the popular movement which was the *contrecoup* in Holland of the revolutions that occurred elsewhere in 1848. It is considered to work well on the whole, even by those who, instead of holding the democratic opinion that there is an inherent right in every man to have a share in the government, incline to the more practical view that the duty of bearing the burden and responsibility of government should devolve only on persons who show some fitness for it. The electors themselves are aware of a certain power of judging for themselves in local matters. They are remarkably independent where local elections are concerned,\* while in general elections they are apt to be led by the *dominé* (as the minister is called in Holland, like the

schoolmaster in Scotland), or the priest, or their landlord, or some other superior person. The Presbyterian form of Church government, which, as in Scotland, has for centuries accustomed the peasants to hold office as elders and deacons, may have trained them for political self-government as well.

Of course there are drawbacks to this as to every human institution. The Council is apt to be arbitrary in the matter of local taxation. The system of "progression," which is applied to some taxes in Holland (that is, the system of dividing the ratepayers into classes, and making them pay more or less, relatively as well as positively, according to their place in the financial scale), enables the Council to let the lion's share of public expenses fall on the unhappy shoulders of the great landowner of the parish. In some cases the landowner has acted as the emperor of Germany lately advised his discontented subjects to act, and has turned his back upon the people.

Another institution that must not remain unnoticed is the government of the so-called *waterschappen* (water districts), which cover a great part of the country. As every one knows, a silent warfare is being constantly carried on in Holland against the danger of inundation from sea and river, and it is only by an elaborate system of dykes and drainage that a great part of the land is made habitable and productive. It will be easily understood what engineering skill, what unceasing vigilance, what strict and careful supervision, and what tremendous expenses are involved where these grave issues are concerned. Now, the management of this important business is mainly in the hands of private persons, elected by all landowners within a certain radius. The expenses are met by a tax levied among them according to the extent of their property in the district. The number of votes possessed by one person depends on the number of acres which he owns in the district; but there is a number of votes beyond which no person may go. Women are allowed to vote by proxy. The possession of acres to a certain number makes a man eligible for a seat on the board that governs the district. An executive committee is named from its members; and that committee, with the so-called *dijkgraaf* at its head (literally, dyke count) carries on the usual business. An engineer is attached to the larger "water ships" (to use the Dutch word). The windmills that used to be such a dis-

\* The following is characteristic of the independent spirit of the average farmer. The speaker was an old-fashioned, illiterate man, owner of a small farm. A gentleman, a M.P., was complaining of the heavy local taxes. The retort, not meant as an impertinence, was this: "Mynheer need not complain. Mynheer earns more money by talking than I do by working!" He was referring to the small pecuniary compensation given in Holland to members of the States-General for expenses incidental to their office.



tinctive feature in the Dutch landscape are fast disappearing. Steam engines, of which there are four different kinds, are used for keeping the water out of the *polders* (the low land protected by dykes).

In ordinary times these various offices are no sinecure. In times of actual danger it is impossible to overrate their importance. When the rivers are swollen by melted snow from the mountains in Germany, and huge blocks of ice are borne down by the strong current with startling rapidity, an army of watchers guards the dykes night and day. Members of the governing board are stationed in the houses built at intervals on the dykes. If a crisis occurs—if a gap is discovered in the dyke—they are invested with almost unlimited powers. Farmers, with their carts and horses and laborers, are pressed into service, and yield prompt and willing obedience to the most arbitrary order. It has happened that houses, sheds, and trees have been used to stop the gap. The common danger met, the common deliverance granted must have strengthened the bands of citizenship between the men of all classes, who have been united in the honest, manly duty of guarding their hearths and homes.

S. I. DE ZUYLEN DE NYEVELT.

From The Leisure Hour.

#### THE SUBMARINE ERUPTION AT PANTELLARIA.

THE eruption from the sea-bed near the island of Pantellaria on the coast of Sicily still continues at intervals, and the surface of the sea continues to be marked by the appearance and disappearance of islands. To understand these phenomena it will be well to note the observations of a traveller (Mr. G. W. Butler) who has recently visited the scene and has made some observations and collections of erupted rocks which promise to be of considerable value when the annals of the outbreak come to be fully recorded. With regard to the island which was first observed on October 15, Mr. Butler has found that there appears to be no foundation for the idea conveyed by the words "erupted island," as applied to a product of the previous eruption in 1831. The formation in question proved to be a narrow band of floating volcanic bombs, extending for about two-thirds of a mile in length in a north-east and south-

west direction. These brittle, cindery bombs readily broke up, giving vent to the superheated steam they contained, and upon becoming waterlogged they sank, and within ten days all traces of them had disappeared. Thus the "island" ceased to exist. On the other hand, there would seem to be evidence that genuine volcanic islands have since been formed in the same locality and in connection with the same line of volcanic fracture in the bed of the ocean—in fact, in alignment with the vents which established themselves in 1831 with Etna and other volcanic centres, indicating a very lengthy fissure in this part of the earth's crust. The celebrated island on this same line, known as Graham's Isle, exists to tell us of an underlying volcanic energy which is quite capable of repeating itself. Graham's Island rose up out of the sea in 1831 as a result of the accumulation of ejected materials, and reached a height above the waves of two hundred feet, with a circumference of not less than three miles. It is quite true that islands built of such loose and ill-compacted materials as volcanic scoræ are not of a very permanent character or likely long to resist the action of the waves. Indeed, Graham's Island has long ceased to be visible; the action of the waves upon the loose materials—"stones and rubbish"—soon destroying the crater-walls, and the island becoming a mere shoal, though a dangerous one, and in this form it exists to-day, lying midway between Pantellaria and Sciacca on the south-west coast of Sicily.

The line of volcanic vents which the geologist is now able to plot down on his map of this part of the Mediterranean is not without interest to the astronomer, especially to those who are interested in the volcanic areography of our satellite the moon. The alignments and semi-circles of volcanic vents with which we are familiar on the earth are still more strikingly seen on the moon, whose present surface of continuous dry land we may take as prophetic of the ultimate condition of the earth. As the marine areas of our globe gradually decrease in extent, and old sea-beds become permanent dry land, the crateriform aspect of the earth may prove to be far more like that of the moon than has hitherto been supposed. As seen from another planet the huge depressions, *marias*, and peaks of the effete earth would still more resemble those of the moon.